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PATHWAY TO GOD

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Prayer to Lord Shiva

(Stanzawise Translation in English)

चमक अनुवाक् सहावा Sixth Chamak Chapter

अ॒ग्निश्च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ सोमश्च म इंद्रश्च मे सविता
च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ सरस्वती च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे पू॒षा
च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ बृहस्पतिश्च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे मि॒त्रश्च
म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ वरुणश्च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ त्वष्टा च म॒
इंद्रश्च मे धा॒ता च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ विष्णुश्च म॒
इंद्रश्च मे॒ऽश्विनौ च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे म॒रुतश्च म॒
इंद्रश्च मे॒ विश्वे च मे दे॒वा इंद्रश्च मे पृथि॒वी
च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ऽन्तरिक्षं च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ द्यौश्च
म॒ इंद्रश्च मे॒ दिशश्च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे मू॒र्धा च म॒
इंद्रश्च मे प्र॒जापतिश्च म॒ इंद्रश्च मे ॥६॥

1) Agni the Lord of Fire and the God Indra concerned with it be mine.
2) Soma, the Herbal plant (required for sacrifices) be mine and the God Indra concerned with it be mine.
3) The Sun and concerned Indra be mine.
4) The Goddess Saraswati and the concerned Indra be mine.
5) The Goddess Pooshan and the concerned Indra be mine.
6) The Planet Bruhaspati and the concerned Indra be mine.
7) The God Mitra (one name of Sun) and concerned Indra be mine.
8) The God of Water and the concerned Indra be mine.
9) Tvashta (the Vishwa Karma of Gods) and the concerned Indra be mine.
10) Dhatru the creator and the concerned Indra be mine.
11) Vishnu the God of Preservation and the concerned Indra be mine.
12) Ashwini Gods of medicine and the concerned Indra be mine.
13) Marut, the God of Vayu and the concerned Indra be mine.
14) The various Gods of the Universe and the Indra be mine.
15) The Earth and the concerned Indra be mine.
16) The Sky and the concerned Indra be mine.
17) The Heavens and the concerned Indra be mine.
18) The directions and the concerned Indra be mine.
19) The upward direction and concerned Indra be mine.
20) The Lord of generation and the concerned Indra be mine.

Editorial ...

Did the Vedic Culture and the knowledge of the Sages flower in the Arctic Region of North Pole?

In the early twentieth century well known scholars and geological experts were investigating and discussing whether there were different Aryan races living in different spots or whether there was one Aryan race which lived at one spot and later spread out to Europe and central Asia. Soon they arrived at the conclusion that there was one primeval Aryan race living at one spot and later on spread to Europe and central Asia in different countries. This conclusion was followed from the similarity of philogical and mythological evidences in the primitive Aryan races in Europe, Iran, Egypt and India. The first model of spot in central Asia was given up and the study centred on North Europe. In the beginning all mythological myths used to be interpreted on the assumption that the Aryan race formed and developed in similar conditions in which we were all surrounded. However the mythological myths were altogether of a different nature.

A question arose out of the studies whether the original Aryan race lived in the Arctic Region around the North Pole. Then, the myths started giving some substantial meaning. Indian Mythology says that Prajapita Brahmadev sits in a lotus on a sticklike sprout from the navel of Maha Vishnu and the surroundings are a land of devas. The time unit is also six months a day and six months a night. Such a thing is possible only at north pole. The circumcular area around the north pole is described in Parsi literature as Paradise.

Geological evidence says that the Aryans might have lived in the artic region in the interglacial period which might be a land with no snow at all but fertile with pleasant climate with plants and animals flourishing as in temperate zones. Geologists place the interglacial period of 8000 to 10000 years or say 8000 B.C.

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak who was a Sanskrit and Vedic scholar of Poona wrote three books written in English viz. "The Arctic Home in Vedas", 'The Orion" and "The Chronology of Vedas" According to his views, the Vedas in their various mythological myths and poetic literature supported the above views of Aryans originally residing in the Arctic region. The Vedas describe twilights of morning or evening lasting for a month or more. They give description of long unending nights and imagined the Rakshasas drown the Sun in water (of darkness when it disappears below the horizon during the long nights) till the powers of light over come the powers the Rakshasas and the Sun appears again after the long twilights which named as various deities. The Sun riding a chariot of seven horses meaning seven months of daylight has come down to us from the Aryans who stayed in the Arctic regions. Similar myths appear in Greek and Scandivian and Parsi literature. The Roman calender was first of seven months (September), then eight months (October), then Nine and Ten months (November and December) and finally two months were added when the Aryans came down to the tropical areas when they moved from the arctic region Southwards towards the tropical areas when the glacial period approached with heavy snow fall making their northern areas inhabitable.

The conclusion derived by Bal Gangadhar Tilak by his study of Vedas as well as studies of Western Scholars like Prof. Maxmullar, Posche, Penka, Schroder, Dr Warren, Lyell, Geikie, Evans, Croll, Taylor and others and Geologists are as follows -

1) According to the then geological evidence, the last glacial period must have ended and the post glacial period commenced at about 10000 years ago or 8000 years B.C. The freshness of Siberian Fossil deposits favour this view. Prof. Lyell favours the opinion that 21000 years between two successive epochs of glacial periods while Prof. Geikie's views extend this period to 80000 years.

2) There were at least two glacial and one interglacial period and the geographical distribution of land and water was then quite different from what is at present.

3) There were great vicissitudes of climate in the Pleistocene period, it being cold and inclement during the glacial and mild and temperate in the interglacial period even as far as the polar regions are concerned.

4) There is enough evidence to show that the Arctic regions both in Asia and Europe were characterised in the interglacial period by cool summers and warm winters - a sort of what Herschel called a perpetual spring or what the Parsi literature stated as a Paradise; and the places like Spitzbergen where the Sun goes below the horizon from November till March, were once the seat of luxurient growth of vegetation like what we see at present only in temperate or tropical climate.

5) It was the coming on of Glacical age that destroyed this genial climate and rendered the region unsuited for habitation of tropical plants and animals.

6) There are various estimates regarding the duration of the glacial period according to Geology but regarding the causes of ice age, astronomical evidence appears more probable. According to Prof. Geikie there is evidence to hold that there were in all five glacial and four interglacial epochs and the beginning of the post glacial period was marked by two successions of cold and genial climates at least in the North Western Europe.

7) Several eminent Scientific men had expressed the already advanced theory that the cradle of human race must be sought for in the Arctic region and the plant and animal life originated in the same place.

8) It will thus be seen that if Vedic evidence for an Arctic home where the ancestors of Vedic Rishis lived in ancient times, there is at least at any rate nothing in Scientific thinking which would warrant in considering this result as a prior improbable. On the contrary there is much in these researches that suggests such an hypothesis for scientific men to think that we must look for the cradle of human race in the Arctic regions.

9) The different ages of stone, Bronze, Iron were not synchronous in different countries and the high state of civilization in Egypt is not inconsistent in Neolithic stage in Europe at that time. There is good reason to suppose that the metal age was introduced in Europe by foreign people.

Characteristics of Polar Area -

1) The Sun rises in the South and moves horizontally around the Pole.

2) The stars do not rise or set but revolve or spin round and round in horizontal planes completing one round in 24 hours. The Northern celestial hemisphere is alone over head visible during the whole year. The Southern or lower hemisphere is always invisible.

3) The year consists of one long day and one long night each of six months.

4) The Sun rises and sets once a year and there is one morning and one evening. The twilight of either morning or evening lasts for a long time about two months or sixty periods of twenty four hours each. The twilight moves round and round horizontally.

Characteristics of Circumpolar Region -

1) The Sun will always be to the South Zenith of the observer.

2) A large number of stars are circumpolar that is they are always above the horizon during the entire period of revolution and always visible. The remaining stars revolve in more oblique circles.

3) The year is of made up of three parts one long continuous night occuring at the time of winter. Solstice and lasting for a period of more than twenty four hours and less than six months according to the latitude of the place (2) One long day to match occuring at summer solstice and c) a succession of ordinary days and nights during the rest of the year, the day after the long night is at first shorter and then goes on lengthening to match the long night coming after the long day.

4) The dawn at the close of the long night lasts for several days but the duration and magnificence growing lesser with the latitude of the place. The other dawns between ordinary days and nights will be of ordinary duration as in temperate zone.

There are many such passages or references in the Vedic literature as well as mythological literature which support and corroborate the above facts. The Vedas and Mythologies describe the north pole as Mount Meru and Brahmadeva's day and night as six months each. In chapters 163 and 164 of Vanaparva in Mahabharat, Arjuna's visit to Mount Meru is described in detail where He says "At Meru the Sun and Moon perform Pradakshinas (go around) every day and so do all the stars. Regarding the darkness of long night we are informed the Mount Meru by its lustre (Aurora Borealis). So overcomes the darkness of night that the night can hardly be distinguished from the day. Even in days of Herodotus the statement that "there existed a people who slept six months was held incredible. In the sacred books of Parsis, in Vendidad, Fargard II para 40, we find a sentence meaning "They regard as a day what is a year to us. Ahura Mazda tells Yima, the first king of men about the approach of a dire winter which will destroy every living being and plants by covering the land with a sheet of ice. The king is advised to preserve the seeds of every kind of plants and animals in an enclosure for future generations. Ahura Mazda talks thus to the king who lived in the Paradise of Iranians. The Parsi scripture further says to the king "When a death occurs in a house when the summer has passed and winter has come, a ditch should made and the body preserved in the house for two nights, three nights or for a month until the birds begin to fly, the plants begin to grow, the floods flow away, and winds dry up the water from the Earth". This description is similar to long nights and long dawns in Rigved indicating the Vedic Home of Aryans in arctic regions and supported by Parsi Scriptures and mythology. In vedas there are Mantras and procedures as to how to perform sacrifices during nights, which were necessitated by long nights.

Thus in the early twentieth century, the Indian scholars like Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and others as well as western scholars and scientists found adequate evidence that the Primoval Aryan race lived in the Arctic Zone of North Pole in the post glacial age which Geologists believed to be anywhere between 10000 and 80000 years and after the ice age, travelled to Southern Europe and Central Asia, the weather there becoming inclement but they brought with them their imaginations, beliefs, literatures, poetry, philosophy, sciences and knowledge which they developed while flourishing in the Arctic regions.

It will not be impertinent to add here that 250 scientists on U. N. Panel have predicted that the Earth is warming a bit faster than expected and we might experience inclement climatic changes which include melting of glaciers in the-Northern Zone and flooding of rivers, changing of seasons etc. Might be, the Arctic regions may again become pleasant.

- P. D. Dharwarkar

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Eternity Compressed in time : My reminiscences of Shri Gurudeva

(Continued from the Oct-Dec. 06 issue)

While considering the manifold mystical experiences of Kabir, Shri Gurudeva comes to one special feature of Kabir's mystical experiences. This speciality is concerned with the experience of flavour. Kabir develops this conception of flavour in some Padas. Inasmuch as saint Dadu also depicts his experiences of flavour in certain songs, Shri Gurudeva decides to put together the songs of Kabir and Dadu, and deduces there from the doctrine of flavour advocated by these saints. In this group the following songs are included :

(1) ऐसे है रे हरि रस(Kabir)

(2) हो तो कोई पिये राम रस प्यासा (Kabir)

(3) राम रस मीठा रे (Dadu)

Shri Gurudeva carefully analyses these three songs which mention 'राम रस' or 'हरि रस' and arrives at four characteristics which belong to the experiences of divine juice as described by Kabir and Dadu. In the first place, we are told by Kabir that the draught of 'रामरस' or 'हरि रस' experienced during the state of Samadhic experience is a rare and valuable commodity. Then Kabir goes on to tell us that only a 'गुरुमुख' can avail of this valuable commodity, while a 'मन्मुख' has to go disappointed. Here Shri Gurudeva asks us to remember that the Guru might give us only the "potentiality" of the draught, instead of the draught itself. It is only for the disciple to utilize this gift according to the best of his powers. Both Kabir and Dadu tell us that as a result of this draught of divine juice, the seeker becomes fearless and immortal : "ऐसा अलख अभेव सो अविनाशी प्राण॥" Says Dadu. "जाके पिये अव्हैर जाई" Kabir.

Secondly, the seeker has to pay the "price of desperate devotion to God" for obtaining this divine juice. A great deal of torture and trouble must be undergone before one gets even a small quantity of this divine juice. Kabir tells us, it is only when we first throw ourselves in conflagration, then 'आगे आगे दावा जलै रे। पीछे हरिया होय॥" we experience green verdure.

Shri Gurudeva here recalls the song of the Gujarati poet Preetam, who says :

> "प्रेम पंथ पावकतो ज्वाला, भालो पांछा भागे जोने ।
> माहीं पडया ते महासुख माणे, देखतारा दाझे जोने ॥"

It means that the way of God's love is the way of fire. He, who throws himself into it, will be saved, and he who would merely look on and keep aside, will be burnt to death. It is the active part in this meditation, which will enable us to get out of difficulties and perils. Kabir puts this idea by telling us that such a divine juice could be partaken of only by a man who has no head over his shoulders : 'धड पै सीस न होय।' This matches with another utterance of Kabir elsewhere : 'सीस उतारे भुई धरै'. Shri Gurudeva characterizes it as an illustration of the Vibhavana Alankara, where the effect is produced without a cause. "It is only when we throw down our life that we can rise to the heights of God's experiences." (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, p. 266).

The third characteristic of this thirst for divine juice is its unquenchability. Kabir says, "Listen to me, O saints, your thirst for the Name of God can never be quenched". An attempt to slake the thirst will lead to further thirst. Shri Gurudeva regards this as an illustration of the Visheshokti Alankara, where the cause is present but the effect is not. He recalls the statement of saint Tulsidas that tells that those who have drunk Rama Charita to satiety have never drunk it at all :

'राम चरित जे सुनत अप्पाई।
रस विशेष जानत ते नाहीं॥'

This is an illustration of the Pratipa Alankara. Shri. Gurudeva remarks that the poetical descriptions of these great saints seem to be filled with a series of Alankaras, which enrich the mystical value of their teaching.

The last characteristic of the experience of this divine juice is, as Dadu tells us, that he who partakes of this divine juice becomes one with the juice itself "सो रस ही रहा समाय." Shri Gurudeva regards this as a great idea and examines its implications. "God is the source of this Rasa; the Rasa is the quality which oozes from Him; and the saint receives it and enjoys it to heart's content. The saint becomes one with the Rasa. The Triputi of God, Rasa and saint is exactly on a par with the Vedantic Triputi 'ज्ञेय, ज्ञान and ज्ञाता. The implication of Dadu's utterance is that God and devotee would cease to exist, and only the Rasa would remain. This is exactly as the Vedanta would put it. ज्ञेय and ज्ञाता would vanish and ज्ञान alone would remain. These are illustrations of what we may call Triputi Laya in Mysticism and Metaphysics. The same idea has been brought out with great force in that cryptic utterance of the Upanishads, 'रसो वै सः' The ultimate upshot of flavourism would be that the flavour alone would remain, neither he who imparts the flavour, nor he who receives it. (Ibid., pp. 267-268).

In above songs Kabir and Dadu have mentioned some ancient and modern saints who drank this divine juice. Among ancient saints, Dhruva and Prahlada have been mentioned by Kabir, and among modern saints Matsyendra, Goraksha and Raidas. Dadu mentions the names of Namadeva, Peepa and Sukadeva as having partaken of the divine juice. Shri Gurudeva points out that Kabir particularly mentions Mirabai as having been never satisfied by the draughts of divine juice, as she continuously repeats the performance, cup after cup. Dadu describes Kabir as having been never satisfied by the divine juice and as feeling thirsty even today : पिवत कबीरा नाथक्या, अबहूँ प्रेम पियास। As regards the historic relationship of the names mentioned by Kabir and Dadu. Shri Gurudeva comments that we have to keep in mind only the significant fact that Kabir and Dadu laid great stress on the enjoyment of the draughts of divine juice by the great saints.

Shri Gurudeva next points out that Kabir passes on to the conception of Madira in his song 'है कोई सन्त सहज सुख उपजै' While the conception of Rasa limits itself to the sober enjoyment of the divine juice by great saints, the conception of Madira brings out the state of God-intoxication that overpowers great saints. Kabir gives a very sustained account of the production of this intoxicating liquor. Shri Gurudeva regards the continued metaphor depicted by Kabir in the above song as the best continued metaphor in Kabir or even in Hindi Literature. He calls this metaphor as 'महारूपक'. In his analysis of the song, he mentions six points in the production and enjoyment of the intoxicating spiritual liquor (1) the value of the spiritual liquor in satiating and stabilizing the mind of the aspirant; (2) the components that go to make up the liquor; (3) the method by means of which the manufacture of the spiritual wine is to commence; (4) the sacrifice that is to be offered for the successful production of the divine liquor, in the present case, the sacrifice of the goat of Eros; (5) the actual oozing out of the divine liquor from the pipe of Sushumna; and (6) eulogy of the man who is an expert in the production of this liquor.

Firstly, Kabir throws out a challenge to any so-called saint to produce this divine liquor. He knows that those who can produce this divine liquor are very few indeed. "Is there any saint who can evoke in us the beatificatory experience called...? As a liquorwoman gives us filled cups of liquor, can such a saint can give me even a drop of Rama Rasa?" "If he can, I shall be prepared to give him the brokerage of my entire life-long penance 'जपतप देऊँ दलाली'.

Secondly, Kabir tells us that for the actual production of the spiritual liquor, we have to cut to pieces all our evil passions (Kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsara) and mix their essence with the Gur of the Guru's word. Shri Gurudeva explains that there is energy underlying all these passions, as such they are to be cut to pieces for gathering their psychic energy. This psychic energy is to be mixed with the Gur of the Guru's word. The mixture is to be put in the body-pot, and the pot is to be closed, and no outlet is to be kept for it.

The next stage in the production of the divine liquor is the construction of a fireplace and the igniting of fire. All the fourteen worlds should constitute the fireplace inside which the fire of Brahman is to be lit. The closed body-pot is to be kept on this fire, so that it will begin to boil to the realization-point. Shri Gurudeva's emphasis is on extreme toil and turmoil on the part of the aspirant without which no high achievements are possible.

It is well known that in all ceremonial production it is customary to offer a sacrifice before the process of production is started. In the present case, it is the goat of Eros that must be sacrificed. Madana is proverbially regarded as a goat. We are told by Kabir that the way to sacrifice the goat of Eros is to throttle it, and not to kill it, so that he may give out the Anahat sound before it dies.

Fifthly, says Kabir, when the body-pot has been kept boiling for a long time on the fire of Brahman and a proper sacrifice has been made, then the divine juice will begin to trickle down from the top-most part of the body by way of the distilling pipe of Sushumna, which will act as a distilling agent of the nectary wine to the various parts of the body, so as to keep them satiated, powerful and equanimous. In the case of other liquors, a man feels intoxicated and loses his head and senses. In the case of divine liquor, a man keeps his head cool, and has a complete control of all his sense organs and mind.

"This happened in his own case, says Kabir, when the nectary wine he enjoyed kept him in perfect equanimity and beatification. Such a life, he says, is a very difficult one, and he alone, who has obtained knowledge of the process from a proper spiritual teacher, can become proficient in it". (Ibid, P.271-272).

Shri Gurudeva proceeds to consider three famous songs from Kabir in which he speaks in detail about the satiety, the freedom and the equanimity produced in him by the state of divine intoxication. In the poem "दरस दिवाना बावला", Kabir tells us that the spiritual aspirant becomes 'बावला' or mad after the vision of God. He becomes 'अलमस्त फकीरा' and 'अस्मत का धीरा' Thus entirely maddened by the vision of God, such a saint leads a life of solitary independence. Shri Gurudeva here recalls the description of a 'खग्गविसाण' or rhinoceros in the 'खग्गविसाणसुत्र' dialogue of Buddha. The saint Kabir becomes such a खग्गविसाण' or a totally detached person. Kabir goes on to tell us that every breath of the saint is almost like a cup of wine. Shri Gurudeva attributes this description to the Sufistic influence on Kabir. In every breath that the saint dedicates to God, he is drinking a cup of immortal wine. A Hindu would have said nectar. Shri Gurudeva does not mind Kabir's reference to wine, because wine here is nectar. While pointing out the effects of drinking the immortal wine, Kabir says, 'पियत पियाला प्रेम का, सुधरे सब साथी'. The saint drinks wine while his associates are improved. Shri Gurudeva regards this prima-facie lack of connection between the saint drinking wine and thereby his associates getting improvement in their character as a sort of 'असंगति अलंकार'. Despite apparent unconnectedness between the two, one rises from another. Further "when a saint takes this wine of God-realisation, he becomes free from infatuation and doubt. He reches a state of equanimity. The pauper and the prince are to him alike बंधनकाट मोहका बैठा निरसंका । वाके नजर न आवता क्या राजा क्या रंका ।।" "The saint in Kabir sitting in posture in divine ecstasy", says Shri Gurudeva, "is definitely on a par with Upanishadic sage who sits singing to himself the song of universal unity" (Ibid., P) 274)

(To be continued)

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> *It is the very nature of mind to entertain ideas. But intense meditation faces out thoughts - not an easy task though.*
> *- Gurudev Ranade*

Humanism of Descartes

(1596-1650)

I. Descartes' Life :

Rene Descartes was born in 31 March of 1956 in Touraine in France. He lost his mother in 1597. His father was a lawyer in Brittany and a member of the oldest and most respected families in the region. He was fond of Logic, Philosophy and Mathematics. he had a great eagerness for obtaining knowledge. He was a deligent and talented student. Descartes criticized the traditional system of education and came to the conclusion that the traditional system of education in some of its branches is not founded on a strong base. After leaving La Fleche, he decided to study and learn science and knowledge from the book of nature; and to search such knowledge which would be useful for living. He paid much more attention to mathematics because of its certainty; but for Descartes what was the relation of Mathematics to other kinds of knowledge?

It was in 1619 that in an isolationistic meditative state he established the principles of his philosophy. He had three successive dreams and so, was convinced that his mission was the search of truth by the help of reason.

Some of his works are as follows :

1. Meditations on First Philosophy.
2. Discourse on the Method for Properly Conducting Reason and Searching for Truth in the Sciences.
3. Rules for the Direction of the Mind.
4. Principles of philosophy.

Descartes was a moderate and temperate man and had a friendly manner. He preferred to have a calm life in a secluded corner and never married. He always withheld from arguing about merely theology. His belief was that the secretes revealed through divine are uplifted from the ability of human mental faculty, therefore he made himself busy with the problems that only pure reason could solve them.

He was a philosopher and mathematician not a theologian. His aim was to obtain philosophical truth by applying the pure reason.

II. Descartes, Father of Modern Philosophy :

In France the Rationalistic Philosophy developed, and according to this philosophy, power of human reason could achieve knowledge of the universe.

The French Philosopher Rene Descartes is said to be the father of this philosophical school of Rationalism which is one of the most imortant foundations of modern philosophy and philosophical humanism. European philosophy is under the influence of Descartes and his ideas. He founded a philosophy and hoped that, such a philosophy would end the bitter controversies which were going on between the Authoritarianism and sciences.

Like Plato, Descartes believed that, reason is universal in all human beings and also it is the most important element in human nature. He believed that any certainty of knowledge can be obtained only by mathematics and science, because sense perceptions are often deceptive and therefore the knowledge based on such perceptions is not reliable. Thus Descartes founded his rationalistic Philosophy on mathematical principles of intuition and deductive reasoning rather than empircism which is based on sensory observations.

Descartes had a special disdain for philosophy, because he says that "philosophy" has been studied for many centuries by the most outstanding minds without having produced anything which is not in dispute"[1].

It is really Descartes' passion to achieve the truth. He says about himself : "I have always had an extreme desire to learn how to distinguish the true from the false, in order to see clearly how I should act and to be able to travel with assurance through this life"[2].

"But is it possible for me to overthrow all the accumulation of my lifelong beliefs, however false or uncertain, and to use only my own reason as the basis for believing anything? This is what Descartes proposes and this is the way Modern Philosophy begins -- with a revolutionary overthrow of all belief, and so with a complete break with the medieval world, including the authority of the Church - controlled Scholastic Philosophy"[3].

"In the first sentences of the Meditations, Descartes says: "Everything must be thoroughly overthrown for once in my life, if I ever want to establish anything solid and permanent in the sciences". Descartes goes on to say : "Today I have freed my mind from all cares. I am quite alone. At last I shall have time to devote myself seriously and freely to the destruction of all my former opinions". But can I, by my own reason, establish solid and permanent truth?"[4].

III. Humanism and Descartes :

We can find the humanist philosophical ideas of Descrtes in his method of exaggerative doubt and in his idea that he cannot doubt his existence but can have doubts about anything else.

His certainty about his existence consequently implies the definite and certain existence of all human beings in general; and shows that the mankind should be sure and confident of its existence and through this certainty, mankind should come to this belief that it has the greatest influence, effect and impression on universe. Therefore mankind should not submit and give up itself thoroughly to the Church and its theologians. For Descartes, mankind should stand up by the power of its own human reason and rule over its destiny. The Church should not rule over human destiny.

The mention was made above about Descartes, is the consequence of his methodic doubt, which is the base of humanism and modern philosophy.

Descartes had doubts about the authority of the philosophy of the past. He also doubted what his own senses told him. His concentration on the search for truth and for philosophical foundation was that he wanted to reach to clearly and distinctly doubtless knowledge. He saw that he himself might be able to think, but that thinking was separate from the body and senses. For Descartes it was possible to achieve knowledge and understand the material world through mathematics.

To reach such a true and doubtless knowledge, he propounded a set of methodological rules as follows :

1) Never accept anything as true if preconceptions are presented in the mind.
2) Divide and issue into as many parts as possible in order to resolve them.
3) Impose on orderly manner of thought that begins with the simplest and work towards the most complex issues.
4) Completely include all enumerations, and all comprehensive reviews - "leave nothing out".

From the above mentioned ideas of Descartes, we find that he relies on human reason to attain true and doubtless knowledge. His exaggerated reliance on human reason has made him a modern rationalist and we know the Rationalism is closely connected to humanism.

We can consider Descartes as the best example of a master thinker. He can be read in different and incompatible ways. In Anglo - Saxon circles he is often understood as an epistemologist, but in France he is mainly considered as a humanist philosopher, since he is a thinker whose theories are focused on the concept of human being.

Notes and References

1. From Socrates to Sartre : The Philosophic Quest by T. Z. Lavine. Bantam Books March 14, p 92.
2. Ibid p. 92. 3. Ibid p. 92. 4. Ibid p. 93.

NOTE : "Humanism - The Cream of Western Philosophy" by same author will be published in next issue)

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R. D. Ranade on Experience and Reality in the Upanishads

A Brief Abstract :

Professor R. D. Ranade (1886-1957) was a well-known philosopher-saint. He was a great mystic also. He was an erudite scholar with encyclopaedic learning. He was a reservoir of spiritual experiences. He laced his spiritual experiences with pathos and rare insights. He was a life page turner. The whole universe for him was God's beloved land. His motto was 'ONE God, ONE World and ONE Humanity'.

Prof. Ranade's writings have always been inspiring and instructive. A devoted student of philosophy and religion as he was, there is in his writings, a vivid analysis of intuitive truths of the upanishads.

This paper attempts a brief account of Prof. Ranade's approach to Upanishadic Reality and spiritual experience.

I

R. D. Ranade on Experience and Reality in the Upanishads :

Professor R. D. Ranade (1886-1957) was a world known philosopher-Saint. He as a great mystic also. He was an erudite scholar with encyclopaedic learning. He served Allahabad University since 1928 and retired as its Vice-chancellor in 1946.

Professor Ranade's writings have always been inspiring and instructive; they broaden the outlook of the readers and foster toleration. His style of writing is direct, attractive and lucid.

Professor Ranade's was a pure and pious life. He was a man of simplicity, natural grace and a very loving personality. He spent all his life in deep meditation and contemplation.

Shri. Bhausaheb Maharaj (1843-1914) the Saint of Umadi was the spiritual teacher of Ranade; the saint of Nimbargi was his *parama guru.* The two great personalities were exemplers of conduct and attainment. He loved them from the bottom of his heart.

Professor Ranade has been recognised as an authority in the field of spirituality. He says that purety of motive and virtuous conduct are the touch-stones of our spiritual progress. We should search our hearts to see how genuinely we are interested in spiritual life. And real spirituality consists in feeling God's presence in every being in every nook and corner of the universe. Ranade's was a life of remarkable value as he was in spiritual communion with the divine. Spiritual experience is continuous. If it comes once in a while and leaves a person often, it is no spiritual experience. It is another name for inituitive experience or *anubhava* of God. Moral purity is a *sine-qua non* of spiritual life.

II

Professor Ranade was rational, undogmatic and non-superstitious. He had great respect and 'intellectual love' for the Indian tradition. He was comparative in his approach; and brought in and praised intuitive truths of the West; for him philosophy knows neither East nor West; it knows only horizon! His contribution to upanishadic thought was the most original, brilliant and epoch-marking. A devoted student of philosophy and religion as he was, there is a vivid analysis of intuitive truths in his writings. In his books, there is a scintillating study of the essence of the great revelations of saints, philosopher and seers of mankind.

III

The Upanishads are the end-portions of the *Vedas.* Therefore they are called *Vedanta (Vedatanta). Veda* means knowledge; *Vedanta* hence means end of knowledge or highest knowledge. The upanishads pay more attention to the knowledge part of the *Vedas (jnanakanda)* rather than to the ritualistic part *(Karma-Kanda).* In fact the upanishadic *rishis* protested against the animal sacrifice a part of ritual, which was prevalent during the Vedic times. Upanishads thus stand for knowledge which is based on reason. The upanishadic seers turned inward and asked for themselves such questions as 'who am I?' 'from whence I have come?' 'whither I am going?' The upanishadic seers found it to be the inner essence of every individual and they named it as *atman* or soul. *Atman* is a non-physical principle. It is partless *(akhanda)*; it cannot be cut into pieces by any weapon; it cannot be burnt by fire. It is in other words indestructible *(avinasi).* It is not the body, not the sense-organs not the mind, not the intellect, because all these are changing and destructible. But the mark of Reality is that it is undivided and unchanging. The Reality in other words is eternal *(nitya).*

It is existence, knowledge and bliss *(sat chit ananda)*; it is self-luminous *(swyam jyoti).* It is indubitable as it is the basis of all denial. Thus it is self-certifying *(svatah pramana)* and self-established *(svayam-siddha).* It is the purest principle *(amala* or *suddha).* It is unborn *(aja)* and hence deathless *(amara).* It is free from all evolution *(aparinami)*; it is infinite *(anantha)*; in itself it is causeless *(nirhetuka).* It is the basis of *jagrt, svapna* and *sushupti* the three states of experience. It exists throughout. It is all in all. Body in only an instrument, which is subject to change, decay and destruction. Hence *Atman* is the only Reality. Body is apparent.

The cogitation of the Vedic Seers regarding the fundamental source of the universe resulted in the discovery of the principle of *Brahman.* This was later unified into the principle of *Atman,* the inner essence of all. The *upanishads* point out that, there is altogether no distinction between *Brahman* and *Atman* and both are one. This identity of *Brahman* and *Atman* are conveyed by the upanishads through what are called *Mahavakyas* (great sayings). The *Mahavakyas* are (1) *Aham Brahmasmi,* (I am Brahman); (2) *Ayamatma-brahma* (This is atma-brahma); (3) *Tattvamasi* (That thou art), (4) *Prajnanam brahma* (consciousness is Brahman) etc. There is one spiritual current flowing through the whole universe. Thus humanity as a whole is ONE. According to the upanishads the so called matter has no independent existence of its own and that it is only a manifestation of the fundamental reality namely *Brahman* or *Atman* or Spirit. This is the unitory teaching of the upanishads which is regarded as a unique contribution to humanity at large.

IV

According to Professor Ranade, upanishads contain not one system of philosophy but systems of philosophy. Nevertheless they culminate in a view of Absolute Reality.

As a researcher of high order, Ranade finds many methodologies outlined in the upanishads. He lists them as : 1) Enigmatic method, 2) aphoristic, 3) etymological, 4) mythical, 5) analogical, 6) dialectic, 7) synthetic, 8) monological, 9) temporising, 10) regressive etc. The *Isha* upanishad contains the gist of all religions in the world. It runs thus "All this, is the abode of God; one should enjoy life through self-sacrifice". This upanishad is fond of using enigmatic method.........avers Ranade. It says that Reality is far; it is near *(taddure tadvantike)*; This is the enigmatic method by which the upanishad conveys its message. Similarly *Katha, Chandogya, Brïhadaranyaka* upanishads etc. make use of dialectic method. In the *Katha* upanishad, there goes a dialogue between little Naciketa and the Lord of death, Yama, regarding the immortality of the soul. The analogical method is also found in *Katha* Upanishad. It explains the importance of *Atman* through an impressive analogy; "The body is the chariot; the sense organs are the Horses tied to the chariot. Mind is the controller of horse strings. Intellect is the charioteer and *Atman* is the occupier of the chariot. The Chariot is to be driven in the right way by the mind and intellect under the guidance of Atman. It is the *Mundakya* Upanishad which declares 'only truth triumphs not falsehood' (*satyameva jayate,* not anrtain). The *Mandukya* declares that everything in the universe is essentially spirit. *Itareya* upanishad is very interesting in that it attempts an explanation of the created universe. *Taittiriya Upanishad* is a spiritual manual of the house-holder *(grihasta).* It prescribes rules and regulations of an ideal householder as also the *brahmacharin,* the student. The teacher who looks upon his students as his own sons advises them through a convocation address. It runs thus; 'speak the truth, practise Dharma' *(Satyam vada, dharmam chara).* Never give up self-study *(svadhyaya).* The sage of *Brihadaranyaka* upanishad is Yajnavalkya. He taught oneness of humanity to his students like Maitreyi, Gargi etc. A spiritual dialogue also takes place in this upanishad, between philosopher-king Janaka and the Sage Yajnavalkya. *Chandogya* upanishad leads the student step by step towards the fundamental unity of the whole mankind. Its analogies are wonderful and moving. Just as all rivers merge their individuality in the ocean. So are the individual selves merging themselves in the fountain of existence consciousness- bliss Brahman.

V

The aim of the upanishads, according to Ranade is to realise the true nature of man that he is deathless and birthless. It is called liberation or release *(moksha).* It consists in the realisation of the inherrent bliss, that real happiness and peace rest in the infinite *(anantha).* The greatness of the Upanishads consists in declaring that release from bondage can be had here and now, when the person is alive. It is called *jivanmukti.*

VI

But what it means? It is deep meditation. It is the *Sravana-manana-nididhyasana* of the Upanishads, avers Ranade. Deep meditation leads to the flight of the Alone to the Alone. Reality, though ineffable is experienceable. It is called *Anubhava.* The devotee becomes God-intoxicated. The nature of God-realisation is like that of a 'fact' one can never question it, never argue about it. *Anubhava* is the only appropriate criterion of it. There is no "otherness" at this stage. *Anubhava* is an immediate, first hand intuitive apprehension of Reality. What matters in the devotee is the passionate longing for the realisation of God. During meditation one can see the *vastu* even behind one self...........asserts Ranade. Such spiritual experience is universal. Christian saints and saints from other religions confirm this. Thus according to Sri. Gurudev Ranade it is by super sensuous and super-intellectual faculty of intuition, one is able to realise God, who is higher than the highest. This is spiritual experience or *Aparokshanubhuti.* Prof. Ranade declares "The sage sees the *Atman* in all and sees the Atman alone..... For a man to whom all these beings have become the Atman, what infactuation can there possibly be when he has seen unity in all beings"[1]

VII

Now the question is : Can one have the spiritual experience by oneself without any guidance? Ranade says, no. He says : "Time and oft have the Upanishads insisted upon the necessity of initiation by a guru; unless one be initiated by a guru in the path of self-realisation one cannot attain the goal of mystic life"[2].

. Katha Upanishad instructs : "Arise, awake and learn from those who are better than ye; how can we hope to attain to the knowledge of Atman unless we are initiated by another"[3]. Ranade adds :

"The greatness of a guru cannot be adequately praised. Is it possible to add lustre to the sun? One should remain silent and silently bow to the fact of master".

VIII

What else facilitates spiritual experience? According to Gurudev Ranade it is God's grace. Without His grace nothing will happen. He says "God is near to him whose heart is mellowed by the love of God... What is needed is the inner quality of the heart".

What is needed to obtain God's grace? It is total surrender to Him. Ranade says unless we realise our absolute impotence before the majestic power of God it may not be possible for God's grace to descend upon us [3(A)] If a person engages himself in his spiritual progress regularly day after day, there is little likelihood that his faith too would suffer a break. This can be assured only if God's grace is there. The mark of an advanced mystic is that he has the steadiness of the form of God.

God may take pleasure for sometime in throwing his devotees in the midst of difficulties. But is is the optimism and unchangeable faith of a mystic that ultimately He does ward of all evil from His saints. He comes to their rescue all of a sudden. He comes all at once........... opines Ranade. He reserves happiness for His devotees and takes for Himself their lots of sorrow. Hence Sri. Gurudev Ranade asserts, with the example of his own life, that the devotees need not entertain any fear or anxiety.

IX

Sri Gurudev Ranade points to the importance of *Satsanga.* For developing love for spiritual life, there is no other way as easy and effective as the company of good. It draws us to the righteous path without much effort. Listening to spiritual discourses is equally important and the aspirant should be absorbed in such discourses.

Now, as regards the moral effect of spiritual power. Ranade is of the view that "Spiritual power leads to supersensuous experiences on the one hand, and to the attainment of virtues like compassion, love, renunciation, humility or fearlessness on the other. It also gives rise to emotions like wonder and joy. That compassion and that detachment which flow from the spiritual power are alone real; others are only so called. Non-attachment, non-covetousness and fearlessness will have a sterling quality only when they issue from the growth in spiritual life"[4].

X

Sri Gurudev Ranade was a reservoir of spiritual experiences.

He was a life-page-turner. Religion, for him was not a theoretical view of life, but a way of life. His was a fascinating story of a realised spirit. He laced his spiritual experiences with pathos and rare insights. The whole universe for him was God's beloved land. His motto was 'ONE God, ONE World and ONE Humanity' 'Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion' which is his celebrated centre for the study of world Religions and culture at Belgaum; and 'Samadhi Mandir' at Nimbal, are standing witness to his heights in spirituality. It is earnestly believed that Gurudev Ranade had attained the experiences, attained by Narada and Prahlad in ancient times. He always believed that the function of philosophy was for consolidation and consumation of spiritual experiences. As a philosopher, Professor Ranade is intimate fond and touching; and as a *sadhaka* is sincere and sacrificing. He is the artist behind this short article.

Notes and References :

1. Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy, p.316.
2. Ibid, P 330.
3. *Katha Upanishad* 1.3.14

3(A) Pathway to God in Hindi Literature.

4. Pathway to God, Vol. XXXXI, Oct-Dec. 2005. No. 1

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Philosophy of Life in Bhagavad Gita - 9

(Continued from last issue)

9

Introduction :

We are trying to understand the Philo-sophy of life in Bhagavad Gita through various terms used and explained in various stanzas of Bhagavad Gita (BG) and by Gurudev Ranade in the Dhyan Gita (DG) as compiled by him from the selected verses from Bhagavad Gita.

Yoga of Devotion - "भक्तियोग:"

Nature of Worship - 'उपासनास्वरूपम्'

The worship of the unmanifest is very painful. Gita points out the difference of devotion of God in the form of the unmanifest (worshipping the Imperishable Unmanifest *Reality* the *Brahman*) and the manifest - ever attached to God in a personified form steadfastly - worshiping with mind fixed in *Yoga* as explained earlier. The answer to the question as to which of the two is superior is not simple. Gita answers the question saying both do attain God or both are good. Those are considered best *Yogis* who have fixed their minds on God and are being endowed with supreme faith and worship God. But those who worship the Imperishable, the Indefinable, the unmanifest, the all-pervading, the unthinkable, the immutable, immovable, the eternal, who have controlled all their senses, who are even-minded everywhere, who are devoted to the welfare of all beings also attain the Absolute the Supreme. But for those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest, there are greater hardships; because the progress toward the unmanifest is very difficult to be attained by those who are engrossed in this material existence - those who equate their existence to their body (BG 12 - 1 to 5).

Those who work for God (all their actions are for God) and who meditate on God with single-minded devotion do soon cross the ocean of worldly existence and reach God. Gita points out the easier way of attaining God and says those who worship God by dedicating all their actions to God, looking upon God as their all-in-all, meditating on God with single-minded devotion and their mind set only on God, the God does deliver them from the ocean of death-stricken worldly entanglements (BG 12 - 6, 7).

Crossing the Cosmic Illusion - 'मायासंतरणम्'

Absolute surrender to God alone is the means of crossing the *Maya* - the illusion consisting of the three *Gunas.* Gita here points that one must cross the delusion caused by the three *Gunas* of *Prakriti* the Nature, and for that purpose the absolute surrender to God is the only way. The *Reality* the *Brahman*, the imperishable is beyond everything and to attain that status, one has to come out of the allurements by the manifestations of the three Gunas - the inherent attributes of *Prakriti.* The divine illusion - *Maya* of three *Gunas* is difficult to pierce. Only those who take refuge in God can cross over the illusion (BG 7-13, 14).

Several persons have attained God by giving up passion, fear, anger, by purifying themselves through the penance of knowledge and by taking a refuge in God. Gita explains one must be free from passion, fear and anger, get tuned to God and take refuge only in God, purify himself by the fire of knowledge, this way many have attained God (BG 4 - 10).

The wicked cannot surrender to God. Gita points out that the evil-doers, the infatuated, those lacking in knowledge because of *Maya,* the vile creatures, resort to vicious demoniac mentality and do not seek God (BG 7 - 15).

Only in those persons whose sin has vanished, a devotion of God is born. Gita points out that the persons whose sins have come to an end on account of their meritorious deeds, are free from the infatuations arising from dualities and they only worship God steadfastly (BG 7 - 28).

Even a vile man endowed with intense devotion and right resolve, can become a sage. This is an important statement in Gita, it is said that even a vile person has an opportunity to become a sage. Even the most sinful one who worships God with unswerving devotion, should be regarded as a pious person as he has consciously resorted to the emancipating path. He would soon become righteous and attain eternal peace, the devotees of God never perish (BG 9 - 30, 31).

Devotees of God belonging to any race, caste and class are equally dear to God. Gita also further makes another important statement that all devotees are equal irrespective of their race, caste and class. Those who take shelter in God, even women, the *Vaisya*, and the *Sudras*, those considered to be of inferior birth all attain the Supreme state. Gita emphasises that Realisation of one's true Self, has nothing to do with with sex and occupation of a person, it leads to enlightened state of the Supreme Bliss. What wonder is there that the holy *Brahmanas* and devout Royal Saints *(Kshatriyas)* should attain that stage. Having born in this unreliable miserable world, one must worship the God (BG 9 - 32, 33).

Persons desperately calling God for liberation old-age and death can alone realise God. Gita points out that those who strive for deliverance from decay and death by taking refuge in God do realise God - the all pervading Reality - the *Brahman*, they understand everything regarding the *Atman*, and the nature of action - the *Karma* (BG 7 - 29).

Joy from the Glorification of God - 'कीर्तनसुखम्'

The persons who know God to be the source of all beings and constantly glorify God with an undistracted mind, are the great souls. Gita tells us that the great souls taking shelter under divine heritage worship God with dedicated mind, knowing God as the imperishable source of all beings. Always singing the praise of God, striving to concentrate their mind with dedicated determination, saluting God with utmost humility, being ever attached to God with intense love, they love God with devotion (BG 9 - 13, 14).

One who meditates on God, with undivided mind, can attain God quite easily. Gita shows the way how a real devotee attains God. Gita says that the steadfast *Yogi* who, without being distracted by anything, meditates constantly on God, everyday throughout his life, to him the God is easily attainable (BG 8 - 14).

Knowing that God is the origin of all, the devotees are filled with devotion and with their minds fixed on God, they are absorbed in one another's bliss. Gita describes the state of real devotees further saying, the wise knowing that the God being the origin of all things, and all things proceed from God, they worship God with full devotion. With their minds fixed on God, and their lives surrendered to God, they enlighten one another by talking about God and rejoice and remain engrossed themselves in God.

Union of God and Devotee - 'देवभक्तसंयोग'

To a devout *Yogi,* God shows the path of intellect, God gives him a particular bent to his intellect and determine, and with the object of showing compassion, enkindles the lamp of *Atman* before him. Gita also assures that God shows the path to his devotees, Gita says, to those who are always attached to God and who worship God with love. God illuminates the path of knowledge - gives him *Jnan - Yoga* by which they attain God - they realise God's universal nature. Out of love of compassion, God who is residing in them as *Atman,* destroys by the luminous lamp of knowledge, the darkness arising out of ignorance (BG 10 - 10, 11).

God bears the burden of *Yogakshem* - takes the care of the attainment and preservation of those who worship God with constancy and single - mindedness. Gita also emphasises that God does take all care of his devotees who without thinking about anything else, are always attached to God in all respects, he takes care of their *Yoga* - providing them whatever they really need and their Kshema - protecting whatever they possess (BG 9-22).

The Devotee is the Crest - Jewel of the wise - 'ज्ञानवतो भक्तशिरोमणित्वम्'

Of the four types of devotees, the realised devotee who worships God with one pointed devotion is the best. Gita explains the four types of devotees. Four kinds of virtuous persons; those in distress, those with curiosity to know, those seeking material gains and those mature with knowledge worship God. Of the four types, the one with knowledge is excellent; as his mind is always turned to God - the Supreme Reality with one-pointed devotion. God is extremely dear to him and he is to God. All these are exalted indeed, but the knower among them is deemed to be a very Self of God. For steadfast in mind, he is lodged in God alone, the supreme goal of all (BG 7 - 16 to 18).

The realised devotee visualises the whole world as God. Gita points out that at the end of many births, the person with knowledge, realising that *Vasudeva* alone is the universal existence; becomes one with God. Such a soul is indeed very rare (BG 7 - 19).

Entrance into God - 'ईश्वरप्रवेश'

If a person's mind and intellect are placed in God, he will reside only in God Gita advises to set mind in God alone, make the intellect enter into God; then there is no doubt that then onwards the person will reside in God only (BG 12 - 11).

After the seeker realises the nature of God through intense morality, meditation and supreme devotion, he can get entrance into God. Gita describes the process how a seeker unites with God. Gita says, being endowed with pure intellectual knowledge, having controlled senses and mind with firmness, being liberated from the domains of sense objects such as sound, light etc. and transcending the dualities like attraction and aversion, dwelling in solitude, eating very little to sustain, controlling the body, speech and mind, being ever devoted to *Yoga* of meditation, resorting to dispassion with a totally liberated mind, giving up egoism, power of inner urges, arrogance, desires, anger, and all belongings, liberating from the restricted sphere of possessive instincts of "mine", becoming tranquill, one becomes fit for being one with *Brahman*. Having become one with the *Brahman*, he is enlightened and overjoyed in bliss, has left the shores of grief and desire long-back, has become one with all in the infinite ocean of reality, thereby achieving the supreme devotion to God. Through this supreme devotion, he realises God as God is in reality. Then having known God in essence, he forthwith enters into God - merges into God - the all prevading Being (BG 18 - 51 50 55)

Practical View

One may understand intellectually that there is some real unknown energy or force behind all this world and in fact behind all the existence as such, but it is is not easy to comprehend it by our limited powers of the senses - the pure real knowledge is only to be experienced. He or she may therefore need some kind of manifest form to start with and to surrender to its will as a devotee. Otherwie progress toward the unmanifest is very difficult to be attained, as all of us are engrossed in this material existence normally everyone equates his own existence to the body. It then becomes difficult to comprehend the existence of Ultimate Reality without any manifest form. A devotee therefore makes a beginning with a manifest form as a deity and then with progress on the path, the unmanifest can be experienced in due course. Thus to start with, the personal - *Sagun* can be useful as the devotee can use his / her body. For the worship he / she can use hands, use legs for pilgrimage, ears for listening the praise of God, tongue to talk about God, eyes to see God etc. If the beginning is to be made with the unmanifest, no such duties can be undertaken by the work-organs, in fact everything has to be stopped to understand the unmanifest, this is difficult for human beings accustomed to do everything with the body, hence the beginning with *Sagun - Bhakti* is easier. This way one begins with *Karma - Yoga* and tries to transcend action - *Naishkarmya* and then combines *Jnan-Yoga* as he proceeds and develops a devotion for the Unmanifest - *Nirgun, Nirakar,* this way the process is easier. Thus the distinction in the the devotion for manifest and unmanifest form of the Ultimate Reality or God whatever we call, has to be clearly understood then only further progress on spiritual path with knowledge and real devotion becomes possible.

Some obstacles in the process have to be overcome. Gita says that those who worship God by dedicating all their actions to God, looking upon God as their all-in-all, meditating on God with single-minded devotion and their mind set only on God do achieve their goal. But for that purpose we have to get over the influence of the external world which means crossing the influence of the three *Gunas* of *Maya.* This is possible only by total surrender to God which in fact means we should secure total control on our behaviour and take refuge in God. Otherwise the divine illusion - *Maya* of the three *Gunas* is difficult to pierce. Only those who completely give up their ego and surrender to God can cross over the illusion and realise God. For this purpose another very important preparation is to acquire freedom from fear, anger and take refuge in God, purify oneself by the fire of knowledge, then only one attains God.

Gita points out that vile persons do not have devotion, if however vile person gives up his bad character and turns to wholehearted devotion, he can become a sage - this is an important statement in Gita - that even the most sinful one, if he worships God with unswerving devotion, he should be regarded as a pious person as he has consciously resorted to the emancipating path. He would soon become righteous and attain eternal peace.

Another important point in Gita is the Spiritual democracy, Gita says all devotees are equal - Realisation of one's true Self, has nothing to do with with sex and occupation of a person, Anyone who is a true devotee can acquire the enlightened state of the Supreme Bliss. What is necessary is that he should be desperately calling God for liberation from old-age and death, then only he can realise God.

Gita also describes the community of saints. A gathering of devotees. All those who accept the all knowing God as the source of all beings and who constantly glorify God with an undistracted mind, singing the praise of God, striving to concentrate their mind with dedicated determination, saluting God with utmost humility, being ever attached to God with intense love and with devotion, minds fixed on God, and lives surrendered to God. All of them enlighten one another by talking about God and rejoice and remain engrossed themselves in God. Thus the devotees in the beginning and even later are benefitted by the company of other devotees is a clear message of Gita.

One important point becomes clear from the statement that *'the luminous lamp of knowledge destroys the darkness arising out of ignorance. God illuminates their path of knowledge - gives them Jnan-Yoga'.* This means real knowledge is not gained by reading or listening but it comes from intuition from inside as one progresses on the path of spirituality. The effect therefore is that those who are always attached to God and who worship God with love they attain God realise God's universal nature.

It is also an assurance that one need not worry about his *prapanchik* needs and *parmarthik* progress. God takes care of their *Yoga* - providing them whatever they really need and their *Kshema* - protecting whatever they possess, *Parmarthik* and *Vyavaharik Kalyan.*

In view of the above it is obvious that devotion of God should not be for material gains but for spiritual progress only. Therefore it is explained that out of the four types of devotees, the one with knowledge is regarded as excellent, as his mind is always turned to God - *Vasudeva* - the whole world produced and occupied by God. The path is shown thus that a seeker who realises the nature of God through intense morality, meditation and supreme devotion becomes one with the ultimate reality.

In short the process is - endowed with pure intellectual knowledge, having controlled senses and mind with firmness, being liberated from the domains of sense-objects such as sound, light etc. and transcending the dualities like attraction and aversion, dwelling in solitude, eating very little to sustain, controlling the body, speech and mind, being ever devoted to *Yoga* of meditation, resorting to dispassion with a totally liberated mind, giving up egoism and power of inner urges, arrogance, desires, anger, and all belongings, liberating from the restricted sphere of possessive instincts of "mine", becoming tranquill, one becomes fit for being one with *Brahman* - Through this supreme devotion, he realises God as God is in reality. Then having known God in essence, he forthwith enters into God - merges into God - the all pervading *Being*.

(To be continued)

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First bread and then religion

Material civilization, may even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed... Roof up priestcraft from the old religion, and you get the best religion in the world. Do you understand me? Can you make a European society with India's religion? I believe it is possible and must be.

- Swami Vivekanand

Is God absolutely perfect ? A Whiteheadian Alternative

Unlike Leibniz's and other traditional conceptions of God Whitehead's God is not the sole and whole creator of the actual entities (reality). Otherwise God will have to be responsible for every detail of creation including evil. God is a co-partner in the creation of a self-creating creature in so far as the function of God is to envisage relevant ideals as lure for self-realization on the part of nascent actualities. Leibniz conceives God as independent, absolutely complete, self-sufficient, self-contained and perfect so that nothing can be added to enrich his experience. Perfection is identified with that which is eternal, immutable, unchanging. Whitehead conceives God, as the supremely relative, he"prehends the totality of the world's creative advance. Its concreteness is therefore taken into God's ongoing self-formation, and thereby enriches God's own actuality" God's consequent nature, Whitehead holds, is thus "the weaving of God's physical feelings uipon his primordial concepts." In other words, "God's supreme activity lies in his creation of himself... by means of the conceptual richness of his inexhaustible pure possibilities God is able to absorb into himself the multifariousness of the world, overcoming the evil of its destructive conflicts through the higher harmonies this infinite imagination provides."

Thus, in a very real sense, Whitehead conceives of the entire progressively redeemed world as the body of God in and through which God's primordial conceptual richness is actualized and experienced in an open-ended process. Process thinkers have argued for a redefinition of perfection, dynamically conceived.

In this sense God is the greatest power but not the only power. Whatever is actual has some degree of power. Undoubtedly the notion of perfection refers to a being that is unsurpassable. But it does not mean that this being cannot surpass itself. The changing aspect of the divine nature is the supreme instance of sensitivity and responsiveness. This is best expressed in Whitehead's words thus, "The consequent nature of God is his judgement on the world. He saves the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life. It is the judgement of a tenderness which loses nothing that can be saved. It is also the judgment of a wisdom which uses what in the temporal world is mere wreckage." Though God's wisdom puts it to best use, what in the temporal world is mere wreckage, it must be worth saving in God's judgment. The word *can* here emphasises the role of the temporal creatures' efforts and freedom.

In framing his conception of God, Whitehead is conditioned negatively and positively by tradition and the demands of experience and conceptual coherence in the light of the development of modern knowledge. He is not out to justify willynilly an assumption "that a philosopher must somehow invent God." Like Aristotle he is entirely dispassionate in his considerations about God. He is endeavoring to formulate an adequate conception of God in the logical sense, the best that one can, a conception which is not only free from the shortcomings of the traditional religion and philosophy but also meets the demands and rights of experience and logical coherence. Whitehead holds, "What metaphysics requires is a solution exhibiting the plurality of individual as consistent with the Unity of the universe, and a solution which exhibits the World as requiring its union with God, and God as requiring his union with the World. Sound doctrine also requires an understanding how the ideals in God's nature, by reason of their status in his nature, are thereby persuasive elements in the creative advance. Plato grounded these derivations from God upon his will, whereas metaphysics requires that the relationship of God to the World should lie beyond the accidents of will, *and that* *they be founded upon the necessities of the nature of God and the nature of the World."* Whitehead points out that European civilization is dominated by three conceptions of God, each of which has its, own shortcomings. First, there is the Caesarian or Mohammedan conception of God as an imperial ruler - God as omnipotent, self-sufficient, absolutely non-relational. Second the Aristotelian conception of God as the unmoved mover. This God is considered only as the logical or the first cause and not an effect. Lastly, there is the Hebrew God as law or the moral principle of righteousness. There is also the development of this Hebrew God into God as love-the God of Galilee and the Bible.

According to Whitehead all three conceptions of God commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. In their zeal for preserving the absoluteness, infiniteness, greatness and supremacy of God they have mistaken some partial or abstract aspects of God for the concrete reality of God. As Hartshorne puts it 'The fallacy takes two forms in relation to God. (1) We may identify God, conceived in terms of value, with sheer "perfection", defined as completeness or maximality of value such that nothing conceivably could be added to it, and from which therefore every form of self-enrichment, every aspect of process and of potential but unactual value, is absent... (2) We may also identify God, conceived in terms of causality, with sheer power or activity, a "cause of all", which is in no aspect of its being the effect of any, an agent which acts but is not acted upon... A similar abstractness is involved in the concept of God as the "most real being" or "pure actuality"[7] as conceived in the traditional conception of God.

According to Whitehead these traditional notions of God involve the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" in so far as God is conceived as absolutely self-sufficient and perfect being requiring nothing beyond himself for his existence. This is the definition of God in essentially non-social terms. But the very meaning and function of God consists in his being responsive to the needs and aspirations of his creatures. Therefore, God's nature must be conceived in relational terms so that God can have social relations with His creatures by way of fellowship, sympathy, love and guidance. It is the imperishable merit of Whitehead's conception of God to have done so in so far as his philosophy hinges upon the reality and meaningfulness of relations. The traditional notions of God as conceived in terms of total independence of others is wrong. It has destroyed the intellectual prestige of the older types of theology. Hartshorne succinctly puts this thus: For traditional theology, God was to be conceived as "absolutely perfect, independently of man, incapable of receiving from man any good or evil. The very act of creation by such a God must be absurd and meaningless. A being, which contained, in sheer independence of others, all possible perfection and value must surely know better than to clutter up existence with beings, which can add nothing to the value that would exist without them. Such absurdities, and many others, have largely destroyed the intellectual prestige of the older types of theology."

In the traditional conception of God, when God is said to be absolutely perfect, it means that God is "internally complete", "completely made" or "finished". When we say that something is "not perfect" it implies fault finding or criticism. But religious consciousness requires a worshipful God, and worship excludes criticism and fault finding. But "an absolutely self-sustaining" and self-sufficient God, in the very nature of his being, requires no relations to anything beyond himself. In that case religion loses all meaning in so far as prayer, worship, etc., require relation to God. God, being perfect, will be immutable. He cannot change for the better in so far as "perfect" means that there can be no better. Nor can he change for the worse because to decay, degenerate, would be a weakness and an imperfection and such a God cannot inspire worship. This is the conception of God in terms of static perfection. There is an un-noticed assumption here. As Hartshorne tells us, "It makes sense to think of a value so great or marvelous that it could in no sense whatever be excelled or surpassed. How do we know that this even makes sense? In my view it does not and is either a contradiction or mere nonsense". But the ordinary meanings of perfect do not altogether exclude change. For example when Wordsworth wrote of his wife as a "perfect woman", he certainly did not mean that she was totally unchangeable. Accordingly if the world contributes nothing to the greatness of God, then it may be asked, what are we all doing, and why talk about "serving God", who, you say, gains nothing whatever from our existence? It follows that the traditional ideal of divine perfection or infinity is miserably unclear or ambiguous.

The creature's value to an absolutely perfect God is irrelevant. God is statically monopolar and solely immutable. Such a God contradicts our religious sensibilities of a God who is lovingly and actively related and responsive to world. If God is love then something is to be internally related to and affected by it. But in the traditional conception God's knowing and loving are supposedly just the opposite. We are told that God's relationship with the world is not real in God objectively, but is only attributed to him by extrinsic denominational religion because of the way our minds think about him as cause only. The relationship is the relation of reason, which does not affect God's immutable nature. Process philosophers reject this logic. "Can a thing", Hartshorne asks, "be in relation and yet be exactly as it would be if it were not in relation?" It is not more meaningful to argue "what knowledge the divine has must be one thing if it creates (or if there exists) this world, and another thing if it creates that world" "To say, on the one hand, that God is love... and on the other to speak of an absolute, infinite, immutable, simple impassive deity is... a gigantic hoax" "for to love a being yet be absolutely independent of it and unaffected by its welfare or suffering seems nonsense." Indeed, it destroys "the whole point of religion" as the free loving worship and service of God *(Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism,* Chicago *Willette Clarke & Co., 1941, p.117).* "Either God really does love all being, that is, is related to them by a sympathetic union or religion is a vast fraud." We may ask above all is the chance to contribute to the being of others, yet "In loving God we are, according to thousands of orthodox divines, forbidden to seek to give, for God, they say, is a totally impassive, non-receptive, non-relative being." The error of traditional concept of God is that in seeking to protect God's absolute perfection it has paid him the unnecessary and erroneous metaphysical compliment of conceiving his nature as monopolar - as pure Being devoid of becoming, as wholly immutable, without a dynamic aspect, etc. Therefore Whitehead insists that a more adequate conception of the divine reality is to conceive God as dipolar in the same way as all other realities are conceived as dipolar. That is why Whitehead insists that God should not be made an exception to the metaphysical principles, which apply to all reality. Whitehead regards God as the chief exemplification of the metaphysical categories. Such a process conception of God is coherent with our religious sensibilities of a related and loving God, and with the metaphysically relational understanding of the world.

Furthermore if God is perfect in all respect, as the traditional conception holds, then he must be perfect in power and consequently whatever heppens is divinely made to happen. Perfect in power means omnipotent. Traditional notions have treated God as an exception to the metaphysical principles applicable to other realities. God is invoked for the removal of perplexities arising in their systems. Arbitrary power is ascribed to the nature of God so that anything baffling can be attributed to it. Such views do not really explain what requires to be explained. As Whitehead says, "My point is that any summary conclusion jumping from our conviction of the existence of such an order of nature to the easy assumption that there is an ultimate reality which, *in some unexplained way* is to be appealed to for the removal of perplexity, constitutes the great refusal of rationality to assert its rights".

Whitehead insists that God should not be exempted from the metaphysical categories applicable to temporal actualities. The same set of metaphysical categories must be applicable to all realities including God. But Whitehead points out that traditional notion of God "made no effort to conceive the World in terms of the metaphysical categories by means of which they interpreted God, and they made no effort to conceive God in terms of the metaphysical categories which they applied to the World. For them, God was eminently real, and the World was not derivatively real. God was necessary to the World, but the World was not necessary to God. There was a gulf between them.

The worst of the gulf is, that it is very difficult to know what is happening on the further side of it. This has been the fate of the God of traditional theology. It is only by drawing the long bow of mysticism that evidences for his existence can be collected from our temporal world. Also the worst of unqualified omnipotence is that it is accompanied by responsibility for every detail of every happening".

Traditional notions characterize the nature of God and the World totally in different terms. God is absolutely perfect, the world is imperfect; God is infinite, the World is finite; God is cause, and the World is an effect; God is permanent, the World is fluent; God is One, the World is many; God unity, the World is diversity; God is independent, the World is dependent; and so on Whitehead tells us that each such characterization would naturally result in a dualistic separation of realities so that no such characteristic of one can belong to the other in any sense. He says that the concept of God as "unmoved mover"and the Christian concept of God as "eminently real" has resulted in a "combination of the two into the doctrine of an aboriginal, eminently real, transcendent creator, at whose flat the world came into being, and whose imposed will it obeys is the fallacy which has infused tragedy into the histories of Christianity and of Mahometanism." Thus this traditional God was internally complete absolutely self-sustaining and required no relation to anything beyond himself. On this view it follows that the historic universe becomes degraded to a status of partial reality or mere appearance. Such a view flies in the face of most evident characteristic of our experience. "We live in a world of turmoil." Whitehead objects to the doctrine of God as "the one supreme reality, omnipotently disposing a wholly derivative world" and that all-effective agency in the world belongs to God alone.

Whitehead looks upon the consequences of this doctrine of God with horror. On this view God would be a despot or a dictator exercising coercive power whimsically or other arbitrary compulsions and never in accordance with rational purpose. It would also follow that God becomes responsible for evil in so far as he determines every detail of everything. This view would dismiss an important element of our experience, viz., human freedom. But Whitehead points out that such a consequence conflicts with "our experience of responsibility, of approbation or of disapprobation, of self-approval or of self-reproach, of freedom, of emphasis. This element in experience is too large to be put aside merely as misconstruction."

Furthermore Whitehead criticizes the concept of God as unqualifiedly omnipotent, when he says that God is not the only cause or Creator of the actualities in the world. According to traditional conception of God, God is said to be absolutely perfect. Perfect in power means omnipotent. If God were to be imperfect and weak it should not satisfy the demands of religious consciousness. No one would worship such a God. If God were to struggle like other creatures of the world to achieve what he wills, then why should other creatures give reverence to such a being who cannot achieve what he has willed. Therefore in order to make God respectable and worshipful, He is credited with unqualified power to do anything and everything unlike the ordinary creatures that are unable to achieve what they will. Hence, the consideration of God's omnipotent power assumes central importance in philosophy of religion. Now what can this omnipotent power of God mean?

In traditional conception it means the power to absolutely determine what happens. This all-powerful God solely determines every detail of what is heppening in the world. Consequently nothing at all is left for the temporal creatures to decide. We may then ask what about creaturely freedom? Whatever the seriousness of the answer we always find it engaging in double talk. This is the concept of deity as the *tyrant* ideal of power. Hartshorne describes it thus, "I decide and determine everything, you (and your friends and enemies) merely do what I determine you (and them) to do. Your decision is simply mine for you. You only think you decide. In reality the decision is mine..." "As the gangsters sometimes say, after specifying what is to be done, "You are going to like it" - In other words, to do 'It with a will If this is not the despot's ideal of power, what is?" In other words, God is the only ultimate agent determining everything in the universe. All effective agency in the universe is to be ascribed to God.

The consequences of such a doctrine, according to Whitehead, do not square with the facts of experience.

First, God becomes the supreme agency of compulsive power. The glorification of God would mean glorification of power, which according to Whitehead, is morally dangerous and even barbaric. It would even suggest that God's use of power is arbitrary in so far as a despotic tyrant or dictator would act from whims or passionate compulsions and not from a rational purpose arising from a rational nature. Further the power of God as coercive power may over rule or even take away the freedom of temporal things.

Secondly the element of freedom in the measure of our experience is so large that it cannot be put aside as illusory or misconception. Human effort becomes insignificant if God determines everything. Man becomes helpless to co-operate with God. In other words no genuine meaning can be given to human freedom. Human initiative and activity are rendered meaningless. Therefore the assumption of God's omnipotent power is, as Whitehead tells us, incompatible with "our experience of responsibility, of approbationor of disapprobation, of self-approval or of self-reproach, of freedom, of emphasis. This element in experience is too large to be put aside, merely as misconstruction."

Thirdly, the traditional doctrine of God as "the one supreme reality, omnipotently disposing wholly derivative world" would make God related to the world by unconditioned acts of will. It would follow that God is responsible for every detail of heppenings in the universe. It would lead to the doctrine of complete determination, which would entail making God responsibile for all evil in the world. Whitehead says, "If this conception be adhered to, there can be no alternative except to discern in Him the origin of all evil as well as of all good".

Undoubtedly no religious consciousness feels comfortable in such unpalatable consequences. Men of religion do express their disgust and horror at these consequences of the traditional doctrine.

Accordingly Whitehead points out that, "There is a general tendency in the universe to produce worthwhile things, and moments come when we can work with it and it can work through us. But that tendency in the universe to produce worthwhile things is by no means omnipotent. Other factors work against it" According to Whitehead every actuality is a self-creating agency working as a co-partner with God in creation.

It is the moral and religious considerations, which made the traditional thinkers, apply to God the categories of their philosophy with an uneasy conscience although metaphysically they placed God above and beyond the categories. This is the best that can be said of the traditional procedure. Whitehead's procedure is intellectually more straightforward in so far as he applies to God all the categories of his system. The scheme of categories applicable to every actual entity, including God, are stated in a summary form in the chapter on 'The Categoreal Scheme' in *Process and Reality,* where he eleborates their meaning with reference to our experience. In argument with Whitehead it is maintained that if the world and God are characterized altogether differently, in such a philosophy different kinds of realities will have to be admitted. For example, Plato characterized his ideas as permanent substances. He characterized the world as involving life and motion. He then had to face an insoluble problem of deriving a changing world from a changeless reality. Descartes characterized mental substances as thinking, and physical substances as possessing extension. Thus he created for himself the dualism of mind-body problem, which could never be solved. Therefore, Whitehead does not adopt different categories as a criterion for determining the nature of reality. According to him there is monism of kind, that is, one kind of realities and not one reality.

As with anything else, God has an active and a receptive side. On the active side, God envisages, foresees all possibilities, and orders those possibilities in graded relevance to the becoming of actualities. Whitehead rejects the concept of God as an omnipotent despotic tyrant or even as a cosmic puppeteer. God is seen as always acting persuasively, and not coercively "luring" the creatures to their fulfillment with an ideal possibility offered in each moment. However, all actualities are free as to how they respond to God's lure, whether they actualize it to whatever degree or reject it or fall somewhere between those extremes, God is always luring, beckoning the creatures to become "more" than what they have been, to greater realizations of value and beauty in interdependence with each other.

On the receptive side, just as the past of the entire universe flows into the becoming of any actuality, the entire universe flows into God. Not only do all actualities prehend the lure of God, God also prehends all actualities. All experience is experienced by the divine experience. All experience is preserved everlastingly. All experience becomes a part of the divine memory. Thus God's nature as having a receptive side denies traditional substantialist views that identify perfection with that which is eternal, immutable, unchanging, as in Leibniz. He says, "In the first place, God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse. He is their chief exemplification" Further, "God's existence is not generically different from that of other actual entitles, except that he is 'primordial' in a sense to be gradually explained."

In Whitehead's conception, God is not merely a theoretical idea nor is it merely a religious concept. It is more than all this.

In Whitehead's words, "The secularization of the concept of God's functions in the world is at least as urgent a requisite of thought as is the secularization of other elements in experience. The concept of God is certainly one essential element in religious feeling. But the converse is not true; the concept of religious feeling is not an essential element in the concept of God's function in the universe." He describes it as the principle of concretion or the source of order in the nature of things. In these sharp differences from the conception of God as omnipotent, internally complete and absolutely perfect, Whitehead represents the democratic tendency, which respects the claims and rights of the organic pluralism in the nature of reality. That is why he does not make God an exception to the metaphysical principles. On the other hand his aim is to show that God is the chief example illustrating the categories of his system.

(Note : For further information, references, names of books, readers may contact the author)

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Know your Past

Out of the past is built the future. Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that, look forward, much forward and make India brighter, greater, much higher than she ever was. Our ancestors were great. We must first recall that. We must learn the elements of our being, the blood that comes in our veins... We must build an India yet greater than what she has been.

Now a days everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past, is the us of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true.

- Swami Vivekanand

International Forum of Followers of Gurudev Ranade for Philosophical Research (IFFGRPR), Pune
(Registered Charitable Trust No. E4642/Pune dated 30-8-2006)

International Seminar on *Concept of Ultimate Reality*

in Pune on 6th & 7th June 2007
In the Auditorium of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Pune Kendra

Tentative Programme

The registration of participants will take place from 8-00 to 9-00 am on 6th June. The inagural function will take place from 9-00 to 10-30 at the hands of Dr. Rajen Harshe, Vice Chancellor, Allahabad University. Different sessions will take place thereafter till 6-00 p.m. On the second day, 7th June, remaining sessions will take place from 9-00 a.m. and concluding session will take place at the end between 5-00 to 6-00 p.m.

Swami Paramanand Bharati, of **Shringeri Math** will deliver the **keynote address on Vedant and Science.** This will be followed by sessions in the two days as follows.

View of Christianity - Jensine Andresen, USA, Prof. David Grandy, USA
Father of Lancy Pereira, Mumbai, Dr. Pandikattu Kuruvilla, JDV Pune.

View of Buddhism - Prof. Timbul Haryono, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Prof. Kyung Jik Lee, Cheon, Korea (ROK), Prof. Xia Guangxing, Prof. Gao Ruiquan, and Prof. Tang Zhongmao, all three from Shanghai, China.

View of Islam - Dr. Yusuf Amin, Dr. Mohd. Sunuallah, both from Aligarh, India
Dr. Rafiq Sarkakhawas, Phiroz Poonawala, both from Pune, India.

View of Jainism - Kamalchand Sogani, Jaipur and R.N. Shukla, Pune

View of Lingayat - Shri Subramnya Bhat, Belgaum, India, Dr. M.B. Jalihal, Dharwad.

View of Sikhism - Prof. Jodh Sing, Patiala, or Dr. S. K. Chahal, Pune.
View of Parsi - Madam Meher Moose, Mumbai.
Post Modern View/Science and Spirituality - Dr. Kanchana Mahadevan, Mumbai, India.
Vedant View - Prof. B. P. Basavraj, Dharwad, Dr. K. Srinivasan, Chennai.
Unity in various Faith - Resham Sandhu, Chairman Council of Faiths, Leicester, U.K. Prof. William Clough, USA.
Views of Gurudev Ranade-Prof. Shubhada Joshi, Mumbai, Dr. N. V. Kulkarni, Pune.

Tentatively it is also proposed to arrange a Group Meditation Programme on 8th June between 3-00 to 6-00 p.m. at the same venue.

Co-sponsors of the Seminar :

1. Department of Philosophy, University of Mumbai.
2. Department of Philosophy, University of Pune.
3. Department of Philosophy, University of Allahabad.
4. Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum.
5. Shri Gurudev Ranade Parmarth Mandir, Jamkhandi.
6. Jnan Deep Vidyapeeth (Pontifical Institute of Philosophy & Religion), Pune.
7. Institute of Science and Religion, Pune.
8. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai.

Registration, Donations and Accommodation :

375 seats are available in the auditorium. Majority of the seats are already filled by advance registration and only few seats are now available for those who pay donations of Rs. 500 or more. Spot Registration will be made only if seats are available. It is necessary to register soon. A few rooms are available in the Jain Hostel in walking distance from the venue on advance payment of Rs. 200 per day for 2-bedded rooms. Those interested in contributing and attending the seminar and needing rooms should send money in advance to Dr. M.V. Patankar, 8 Irsha Society, Apte Road, Deccan Gymkhana Pune 411004 by D.D. Payable at Pune.

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Kanakadasa: The Golden Servant

India is known as a land of many religions. The man-God relationship happens to be the central concerns of all religions. There are three ways of worshipping God in Hinduism i.e. Path of Knowledge (*Jnanamarga*), Path of Devotion (*Bhaktimarga*) and Path of Action (*Karmamarga*). All these three ways have been pursued by various people in India all through history. The Path of Devotion is characterized by a deep emotional attachment to God and unshakable faith in Him. It is, therefore, contradistinguished from the highly intellectual approach of *Jnanamarga* or the action-oriented approach of *Karmamarga*.

The Path of Devotion (*Bhaktimarga*) in India has been as ancient as the *Vedas* and the *Upanisads* and expresses itself in the hymns composed by monks and seers. Later it bifurcated into devotion to Siva and devotion to Visnu and articulated in the *tevaras* of Nayanmars and *tiruvaymolis* of Alwars of Tamil region. Andal is one the Alwars, who composed poems depicting the devotion of *gopikas* to Srikrisna. The ninth and tenth centuries were known as the Age of Devotional Literature. The Tamil saint-poets were inspired by the description of gods and divine incarnations found in the *Vedas* and *Upanisads*. Sri Ramanuja, who was inspired by such sources, gave prominence to the element of devotion in his philosophy of Qualified Monism (*Visistadvaita*). His contemporary Sri Ramananda is said to have started a devotional movement in North India. Kabir, who was deeply influenced by Sri Ramananda became a worshipper of *Nirguna*

Brahma and condemned icon-worship and considered pilgrimage as meaningless.

In the sixteenth century Tulsidas was influenced by Ramananda's instruction, became a worshipper of *Saguna Brahma* and composed his famous *Ramacarita Manasa.* Later the tradition of devotional literature was continued by Mirabai and Surdas. Narasimha Mehta was the founder of devotional literature in Gujarat. Sripati Pandita, Mallikarjuna Pandita, Sivalenkamanca Pandita, Palkurike Somanatha, Krishnamacarya and Potana were famous devotional writers in Telugu from Andhra Pradesh. Cherussheri and Eluttachchan were well known devotional writers in Malayalam. Lal Ded (or Lalleswari) in Kashmiri, Gurunanak in Punjabi, Chandidas, Chaitanya and Jayadeva in Bengali, Sankaradeva in Assamese are known for their significant contribution to devotional literature in their respective languages.

In Karnataka, there was a rich harvest of devotional literature, especially *vacana* poetry in the twelfth century produced by the *saranas* (male saints) and *saranes* (female saints) belonging to various stratas of society. Basaveswara, Allamaprabhu, Siddharama, Ambigara Caudayya, Madivala Macideva, Aakkamahadevi, Sule Sankavve etc. are the famous *Virasaiva* (or *Lingayat*) saints, who discussed their mystic experiences in the *Anubhava Mantapa* (Mystic Academy), codified them in the form of *vacanas* (poetic utterances).

The *Haridasa* Movement of sixteenth century owes much to the *Sarana* Movement of the twelfth century Karnataka. The element of devotion (or faith) is common to both the groups though their gods were different from each other. Whereas *saranas* were devotees of Lord *Siva*, the *dasas* were devotees of Lord Hari.

The *Haridasas* comprised of two categories: one, *Vyasa-Kuta* and two, *Dasa-Kuta.* The followers of *Vyasa-Kuta* were learned in the Vedic, Upanisadic and mystical lore about Lord Visnu and his various manifestations and taught their doctrines in the medium of Sanskrit. On the contrary the followers of *Dasa-Kuta* synthesized all the elements of the Vedic lore and tried to communicate them to the masses in simple regional languages like *Prakrit* and Kannada. There was no doctrinal difference between the two groups. Both of them accepted the dualistic philosophy (*Dwaita Siddhanta*) of Madhvacarya. A striking difference between the two happens to be that whereas *Vyasa-Kuta* was knowledge-oriented, *Dasa-Kuta* was devotion-oriented. But both the groups used the *kirtana* (popular discourse) form to communicate the message of dualistic philosophy and devotion to Lord Visnu. Sripadaraya, Vyasaraja, Vadiraja and Sri Raghavendra belonged to *Vyasa-Kuta*, whereas Purandaradasa, Vijayadasa, Gopaladasa, Jagannathadasa and Kanakadasa belonged to *Dasa-Kuta*.

Timmappa was the son of Biregouda and Bachchamma of shepherd (*kuruba*) caste, who lived in Bankapura (a taluka in the present Haveri district), an administrative division of Vijayanagara Empire. The baby was born on Thursday of Kartika Bahula Tadige of Anandanama Samvatsara (1486) and named after Lord Timmappa of Tirupati, as he was born from the grace of the Lord of Seven Hills. As a child Timmappa happened to be very active. As a boy he took interest in drum-playing, which was the professional art of *kurubas*. Biregouda happened to be the administrator of Bankapura. Srinivasacarya, a Sanskrit scholar of Bankapura accepted Timmappa as his disciple and instructed him in poetry, prosody, drama, grammar, rhetoric, mythology, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata*. As Timmappa was a precocious boy, he showed remarkable progress in learning and surprised his own guru. After Timmappa's completion of his academic education, his father arranged for his military education. Timmappa completed that also successfully. By the same time his religious bent of mind was awakened. He began to take deep interest in *bhajan*-singing and meditating upon various manifestations of God.

At that time Timmappa's father Biregouda died rather unexpected, leaving him a forlorn. Then Biregouda's arch enemy Mallanayaka rushed to the Emperor of Vijayanagara carried tales against the late Biregouda and succeeded in being appointed as the administrator of seventy-eight villages of Bankapura division. Reduced to dire poverty, Timmappa and his widowed mother left Bada village for Kaginele village and lived there with their kith and kin.

As a boy of about sixteen, Timmappa used to sing devotional songs, act the roles of mythical heroes in *yaksaganas* and arrange puppet-plays in addition to his routine duty of tending sheep and goats. One day when he was digging the farmland in his village, he chanced upon a few pots filled with gold coins hidden in the earth. Instead of using that money for selfish ends, he spent it for ameliorative purposes like distribution of food to the poor, religious festivals, repair of dilapidated temples and so on. The people, who observed his non-possessive nature, considered him as a great donor and began to call him 'Kanakappa' or 'Kanakaraj' meaning a man of gold. Then onwards Timmappa came to be known as Kanakappa.

As Kanakappa was growing very popular, Mallanayaka, the archenemy of his father, felt deep stings of jealousy and attacked Kanakappa with a gang of his followers and mortally wounded him. This traumatic experience gave a new turn to Kanakappa's life. His spiritual orientation became stronger as a result of which he composed his famous poem, *Hari Bhakti Sara* (*Essence of Devotion to Hari*). As his reputation grew in the society, he was invited by the Emperor Sri Krisnadevaraya and appointed as an Administrator of Bada and Bankapura villages. Then onwards he came to be known as Kanakanayaka. Being deeply influenced by the glory and grandeur of Sri Krisnadevaraya, Kanakanayaka decided to compose his famous narrative *Mohana Tarangini* (*Ocean of Beauty*). As an administrator, Kanakanayaka carried out a number of welfare activities in his area and earned the love of people. In the meanwhile Laxmidevi (or Lakkamma), daughter of Mallanayaka, wanted to marry Kanakanayaka but she was not allowed by her father to do so. Hence Lakkamma took a bold decision to become a *sanyasini* all through her life. Kanakanayaka married another lady, Laxmidevi from a respectable family and got a son called Biranayaka. But when Kanakanayaka was at the height of his power, some unexpected tragedy happened in his life. His beloved wife and baby-boy died suddenly. Obviously, Kanakanayaka was disconcerted by the tragic death of his wife and baby. He refused to yield to his mother's pressure for a second marriage. Meanwhile, Mallanayaka, the archenemy of Kanakanayaka was sharpening his dagger secretly against him. Owing to the disintegration of the Vijayanagara Empire after the death of Sri Krisnadevaraya, Kanakanayaka lost his position as the Administrator of Bada and Bankapura villages. Then he had repeated dreams in which Lord Tirumalesa suggested to him to become his *dasa* (slave or servant). This dream coincided with some bitter experience that he had in his life. Once when he was fighting with the neighbouring people in defence of his own village Kaginele, he was mortally wounded. All these events brought in a radical change in his attitude to life. He had a vision of God, which inspired him to become an ascetic. Thus Kanakanayaka was transformed into Kanakadasa, the golden servant of Lord Hari. The change of identity could be seen in his change of dress from civilian to religious. He clad himself in a *dhoti* up to his knees, a black woolen blanket upon his left shoulder, a turban on his head and a pair of slippers on his feet. He slung a mono-stringed instrument called *ekdari* on his right shoulder, a basket from his left shoulder and held a pair of castanets in his left fingers. Having sought his mother's permission he went on visiting a few places of pilgrimage. Surprised by the sight of his new appearance, people asked him for the cause of this change. He replied to them plainly, 'So far I served the human world as much as I could. Now onwards I shall be a servant of God and spend the rest of my life in the service of God.' Then he visited Tirupati and had a *darṣan* of Lord Venkateswara. Mystically directed by the Lord of Seven Hills, Kanakadasa returned to Bada and found that his mother was already dead. He, therefore, rushed to his mother's grave and prayed. Then he carried the heavy icon of Lord Adikesava from Bada to Kaginele, where he established it and got a temple built. Kanakadasa settled down at Kaginele and dedicated himself entirely to religious activities.

Inspired by a quest for higher spiritual knowledge, Kanakadasa approached Sri Vyasaraya Swami of Sosale Monastery at Tiruma-Kudalu, won his affection and blessings and achieved a remarkable success in spiritual pursuit. Then he revisited Tirupati and wrought many miraculous deeds there. Then he visited Nanjanagudu, Beluru, Udupi and other places of pilgrimage and educated people morally. In his old age he settled at Kaginele. Lakkamma, the *sanyasini* had also grown old by now. She sought Kanakadasa's blessings. Kanakadasa advised her to consider everything in the world as God's *prasada* and keep doing her duty as a mendicant and take care of the temple of Lord *Adikesava.* After a few years, Kanakadasa left his mortal body and merged with Lord *Adikesava.* There is a critical controversy about the date of Kanakadasa's death, which oscillates between 1563 and 1606. The Kannada scholars have to decide the exact year of his death by studying the relevant documents and cultural texts.

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During his long spiritual career, Kanakadasa composed many religious narratives, *kirtanas* and *mundiges* glorifying the grandeur of Lord Hari and pleading for the human need to believe in Him. *Mohana Tarangini* (*Ocean of Beauty*) happens to be his first poetic narrative composed in Middle-Kannada style and addressed to his wife. It is a very popular mythological epic dealing with the life of Sri Krisna and suffused with erotic sentiment (*sringara rasa*). A *Vaisnava* by faith, Kanakadasa has celebrated the grandeur and greatness of Sri Krisna in this poem in *sangatya* metre. The poem recreates the mythical story of the life of Sri Krisna and highlight the major events in his life ° like the birth of *Pradyumna* to *Rukmini*, the theft of baby *Pradyumna* by a demon *Sambarasura*; the burning of Kama by Lord Siva; the fight between *Pradyumna* and *Sambarasura* at the instigation of Narada; the destruction of the demon Sambarasura; the remarriage between *Kama* and *Rati*; the marriage between *Aniruddha* (Sri Krisna's grandson) and *Usha* (daughter of demon *Banasura*, an ardent devotee of Lord Siva) and Sri Krisna's happy return to *Dwaraka*.

The theme of *Mohana Tarangini* is based on many mythological sources like the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata Purana*, the *Skanda Purana*, the *Harivamsa* and *Visnu Purana*. Kanakadasa has assimilated the source material so well and articulated it so beautifully in poetic form that no discerning reader can fail to enjoy it. The epic is known for its narrative skill, mellifluity of language, abundance of descriptive element, colloquial style and marvellous sentiment.

Kanakadasa has exhibited his originality in the articulation of the mythological theme. He has followed the traditional poetic conventions like 'eighteen descriptions' (*astadasa varnane*) in this epic. Although the description of erotic sentiment (*sringara rasa*) is predominant, the other sentiments also 'like devotion (*bhakti*), heroism (*vira*), wonder (*adbhuta*), compassion (*karuna*), odium (*bibhatsa*) and tranquillity (*santa*)' have their due place in the narrative. Kanakadasa has achieved double success in this epic not only by exhibiting his devotion to Sri Krisna but also by showing an implicit equation between Sri Krisna and Srikrisnadevaraya, the Emperor of Vijayanagara.

Although Kanakadasa was a shepherd (*kuruba*) by caste and a Vaisnava by faith, he did not oppose other faiths prevalent in Karnataka then. He was influenced by the Monistic (*Advaita*) and Dualistic (*Dvaita*) schools of thought also. That is the reason why he tried to harmonize all these schools of thought in his comprehensive poetic vision expressed in *Mohana Tarangini.*

Nala Caritre (*Story of Nala*) happens to be Kanakadasa's very popular epic fragment, consisting of nine joints (*sandhis*) and 481 *bhamini satpadi* stanzas and dealing with the tragic suffering of King *Nala* and Queen *Damayanti* occasioned by their unexpected separation and their final reunion. The story of *Nala* and *Damayanti* depicted in the Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata* is so famous that it has been translated into many languages of the world. The fact that the theme of *Nala* and *Damayanti* has been depicted in forty-three Sanskrit works and in thirteen Kannada works testifies to the extraordinary popularity of the story.

The story of *Nala* and *Damayanti* is framed by the story of the *Mahabharata.* When the Five Pandavas, having lost their kingdom, are wandering about in wilderness, Dharmaraja grows anxious about the delay in Arjuna's return from *Indraloka.* When he expresses his anxiety to *Romesh Muni,* who happens to come to *Kamyaka* Forest, he is consoled by the latter, who narrates the story of greater tragedies that happened to kings like *Nala, Hariscandra* and *Ramacandra. Nala Caritre* depicts the marriage of Nala (son of *Virasena,* King of *Nishada*) and *Damayanti* (daughter of King Bhima of Vidarbha) get married according to *swayamvara. Kali,* then, decides to harass *Nala* by sending him to wilderness. He, therefore, takes the guise of a brahmin and gets Nala defeated in the play of dice at the hands of *Puskara. Nala* loses his kingdom and goes into wilderness and abandons his wife, who returns to her parents' home. Nala is bitten by a snake and is disfigured. He joins service under King *Rituparna* as a charioteer. When King *Bhima* conducts the re-*swayamvara* of *Damayanti, Nala* is identified by her and both are reunited with the blessings of all the guests and elders gathered there.

Kanakadasa has shown the tragic suffering, the unswerving and idealistic devotion to Truth and the final joy of reunion experienced by *Nala* and *Damayanti.* He has tried to delineate how pure and ideal love transcends the barriers of suffering and selfishness.

The poem is known for the use of limpid Kannada, occasional folk element, comprehensible *bhamini satpadi* stanza form, euphony and apt similes. All these poetic devices are monitored to express the dominant sentiment of compassion (*karuna rasa*) in a very touching manner. This is possible only because of Kanakadasa's being basically a devotional poet.

His next work *Ramadhanya Caritre* (*Story of Millet*) is a very short but charming narrative of 1158 *bhamini satpadi* stanzas, accepted by critics as an epic fragment. It contains two dominant themes: one, the story of Rama and two, the allegory of the superiority of millet (*ragi*) over rice. The poem happens to be a combination of the religious theme on the one hand and of social concern on the other thereby testifying to Kanakadasa's creative imagination.

Although the narrative does not contain any autobiographical reference to the poet, the internal evidences go to prove the indubitable authorship Kanakadasa. References to *Cennigaraya* and *Adikesava* undoubtedly establish its inter-textual relationship with the other works of Kanakadasa.

The plot of the epic fragment may be summed up as follows: *Sandilyamuni* narrates the story of Sri Ramacandra and of millet and rice to Dharmaraja in order to relieve the latter of his tension of exilic experience. Rama returns to Ayodhya along with Sita and Laxmana after vanquishing Ravana and retrieving Sita. On the way he camps in the hermitage of Gautama Muni, partakes of the delicious meal consisting of a variety of dishes. When their discussion turns to the nine kinds of foodgrain, Hanumanta expresses his special appreciation of millet (*ragi* or *naredalaga*). Then there ensues a heated discussion between millet and rice. Rice taunts and insults millet that being an inferior kind of grain the latter cannot be of any use in any holy rites of brahmanical household. But millet defends itself by saying that it is useful to all, especially the poor at all times, especially during famine and draught. Thus their quarrel grows endless. Rama, therefore, orders them to be imprisoned and promises them that he would give his judgement by summoning them to Ayodhya after some time. Then Rama resumes his journey to Ayodhya. After Rama's coronation is over in Ayodhya, Rama sends for rice and millet, calls a council meeting. The imprisonment for six months has affected the rice adversely. It, therefore, looks emaciated and disfigured. But millet looks hale and healthy as usual. Lord Indra praises the good qualities of millet wholeheartedly. All the gods bless the millet and endow it with their powers. Sri Rama is so happy with the millet that he renames it as *Rama-dhanya* or *Raghava-dhanya* (Rama-Grain) and wishes it all the best.

Ramadhanya Caritre cannot be called an epic though it narrates the story of the *Ramayana in a condensed form.* The greatness of Kanakadasa lies not only in retelling the story of Rama but also in dovetailing the allegorical rivalry between rice and millet. Personification of foodgrains for allegorical depiction cannot, perhaps, be found in any literary work of world literature. But as far as allegorical technique is concerned it is easily comparable to Swift's practice in his allegorical works like *The Battle of the Books* and *A Tale of a Tub*. As in Swift, the allegorical technique in *Ramadhanya Caritre* is motivated by a deeply felt social concern. Kanakadasa, who was born in a low caste and had suffered a great deal in the caste-ridden society of Karnataka, especially at the hands of brahmins, had an inborn sympathy for the people of lower strata of society. It is the dichotomy between the high caste and the low caste that is allegorized in the quarrel between rice and millet. Whereas rice is used by all the people of high-castes, especially brahmins for food as well as for a variety of rituals, millet is the staple food of the poor and low caste people. Though an ardent devotee of Sri Hari, Kanakadasa was at heart a rebel, who protested against the evil of communalism. He wanted to uplift the downtrodden people to an elevated level of dignity. In this sense Kanakadasa was a protesting saint-poet after Basaveswara and a host *saranas* of twelfth century Karnataka. The allegory of rice and millet is not to be found in the *Ramayana* of Valmiki. But it is a product of Kanakadasa's creative imagination. It was grafted into the story of Rama purely for the purpose of social amelioration. Composed in the *bhamini satpadi* stanza form, *Ramadhanya Caritre* has a mock-epic element in it, which makes it comparable to Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.

The language employed in the poem is neither too heavy nor too simple. It has the facility of Middle Kannada and can even be recited mellifluously. One may easily see the influence of Kumaravyasa's style on Kanakadasa's.

Haribhakti Sara (*Essence of Devotion to Hari*) happens to be the last monolithic poetic composition of Kanakadasa, which is as popular as *Nala Caritre*. Consisting of 180 stanzas of *sataka* metre, it depicts the supreme significance of spiritual devotion to Lord Hari. The man-God relationship is characterized by self-examination, despair, anxiety and doubt followed by total surrender, detachment from worldly life and attainment of final spiritual liberation or *moksa.* Kanakadasa places himself in the position of an ardent devotee of Lord Hari and praises him recounting all the important qualities and events related to Him as depicted in the earlier mythical sources like the *Bhagavata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Viśnu Purana* etc. There is a happy combination of religious discourse and poetic discourse in *Haribhakti Sara.* On the whole it contains two types of descriptions: one, the great acts of the Lord in his mythical manifestations; two, philosophical speculations about human soul, world, God and the need for the Lord's grace for the spiritual liberation. This devotional narrative is characterized by the simplicity and mellifluity of poetic language and religious imagery.

Kanakadasa is known for the composition of innumerable of *kirtanas* in addition to religious narratives. But so far only about 250 *kirtanas* have been published by scholars. A *kirtana* is a poetic composition glorifying God with a triple structure of a refrain, sub-refrain and stanzas of uneven numbers like 3,5, sometimes running into 100. At the end of a *kirtana,* there is a signature of the poet referring to his favourite deity. There is no restriction about the theme of a *kirtana.* It may deal with any secular or religious theme. But devotion to Lord Hari happens to be the main theme of a majority of *kirtanas* of Kanakadasa. A *kirtana* is a song to be sung to the accompaniment of a mono-stringed instrument called *ekdari,* set to a popular *raga* (melodic pattern) and *tala* (rhythmic pattern). Thus a *kirtana* is said to be an ideal combination of religious, secular, poetic and musical discourses. Because of this ideal combination, the singing of a *kirtana* could easily capture the hearts of even illiterate listeners and inspire them towards spiritual life.

The themes of these *kirtanas* are related to devotional sentiment, glorification of God's (Hari's) greatness, grace as well as to socio-religious satire. The *kirtanas* may be broadly classified into three categories: one, devotional ones, two, philosophical ones and three, satirical ones.

The devotional *kirtanas* deal with five kinds of man-God relationship. A devotee may conceive of God as Master (*dasya-bhava*); friend (*sakhya-bhava*); husband (*madhura-bhava*); child (*vatsalya-bhava*) and a bewitching figure (*santa-bhava*). Kanakadasa assumes different roles in his relationship with Lord Hari and worships Him in different emotional channels.

The philosophical *kirtanas* of Kanakadasa articulate the doctrine of Dualism (*Dwaita*) propounded by the entire *haridasa* tradition. The *haridasas* believe in the supremacy of Lord Hari, the reality of the world and the reality of five differences 'like those between individual souls; between individual souls and inanimate things; between living beings and God; between inanimate things and God and among inanimate things' and the limited liberty enjoyed by living beings. They accept God as the original image (*bimba*) and the living beings as the reflected images (*pratibimba*). They believe in the supremacy of Wind-God (Vayudeva). Every worship rendered to Lord Hari should be only through the supreme guru i.e. Vayudeva. The grace of Hari is essential for the attainment of spiritual liberation. This broad philosophical framework is woven into the warp and woof of Kanakadasa's poetry and expressed in a simple language to be understood by the common man.

In his satirical *kirtanas* Kanakadasa attacks the religious and social evils. He exposes their obsession with external rituals at the cost of inner spiritual purification and their caste-ism and purity mania. In one *kirtana*, he preaches that people should sow the seed of the divine name i.e. Narayana in the field of human heart, through the plough of tongue and body and live happily in the meditation of Lord Adikesava of Kaginele. In another *kirtana* he attacks the orthodox dualists (*dwaitis*) for their mechanical indulgence in external rites and rituals and yet harbouring the qualities of cunning and deception in their heart. In yet another *kirtana* he asks, what is the use of holy rivers when a man enjoys the company of truthful ones? In one of his famous *kirtanas*, he is deeply pained by the practice of communalism in Karnataka and articulates it very touchingly:

Do not quarrel over the caste, gentlemen,
Do you know the origin of your caste?

There are no vulvas through which
Creatures are not born,
There are no parts of the earth
Which are not trodden by beings,
There are no things
Which are not cooked and eaten.
When the secret is revealed,
Where is the difference between high and low?
O Man, better meditate upon the Omniscient God.

Don't you know water is
The source of all species of life?
Do you, then know the caste of water?
The mortal body is not permanent
Like a bubble of water.
O Man, better meditate upon the Omniscient God.

Lord Hari is the best of all,
Lord Hari is the master of all.
Know that the whole world
Is enveloped by Lord Hari.
Only he is highborn
Who glorifies the lotus-feet
Of Lord Adikesava of Kaginele.

On the whole, the *kirtanas* of Kanakadasa are infused with *bhakti rasa* (devotional sentiment), woven with beautiful imagery and musical in nature so that they can be sung to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

Kanakadasa has composed a number of songs called *mundiges* in Kannada. A *mundige* literally means a heavy log of wood, which has to be lifted by a wrestler. By implication it means a challenge in the form of a riddle offered to the learned people to interpret it correctly. Just as a participant in a folk competition would lift a log of wood by a string tied to it and lift it by holding the string in his teeth and haul it over his head and win the prize, the learned man had to prove his learning by interpreting the *mundiges* (literary challenges) of Kanakadasa. He composed two kinds of *mundiges*: one, light *mundiges* dealing with mythical themes and two, *mundiges* dealing with mysterious mysticism. Many times the learned men had to plead their ignorance and helplessness and accept their defeat, as they were unable to interpret his *mundiges* correctly. That is the reason why a popular proverb came to be formed in his society, 'Don't challenge Kanaka and suffer for it.'

Kanakadasa may be said to be the father of *mundige* form of poetry. Long before Kanakadasa, Allamaprabhu, twelfth century super-saint and mystic of Karnataka had composed innumerable fancy *vacanas*, which were in the form of riddles. These fancy *vacanas* or riddle-songs have not yet been properly interpreted by Kannada scholars. Kanakadasa seems to have borrowed the same technique and adopted it to his *kirtana* form. Likewise he seems to have been deeply influenced by folk proverbs and riddles. Spirituality being the general thematic concern of *mundiges*, they are an important contribution to *dasa* literature. In them Kanakadasa (unlike Allamaprabhu who is exclusively concerned with spirituality) combines the spiritual and the worldly truths. Many times the meaning of *mundiges* depends on linguistic dexterity and puns. In one *mundige*, Kanakadasa considers himself as a spiritual wife (after the *saranas* of the twelfth century Karnataka) of Rangayya, the Lord-Husband and teases Him that He cannot love the flat-breasted wife i.e. Kanakayya of Kaginele, as He has a weakness for other *gopikas*. Here he teases God by taunting Him.

Kanakadasa's contribution to Karnataki music is undoubtedly very great, as he belongs to the *haridasa* tradition. The *haridasas*, in general, gave equal importance to devotional literature and to its musical expression thereby succeeding in capturing the hearts of listeners. As Kanakadasa was trained in Karnataki music, he wrote his *kirtanas* according to the musical requirements like melody, meaning and rhythm. His *kirtanas*, therefore, can be set to specific *ragas* and *talas* and sung very melodiously. In this respect his *kirtanas* are easily comparable to those of Purandaradasa.

Although Kanakadasa's *kirtanas* are written in mellifluous and poetic Kannada, they contain many folk phrases, proverbs and idioms thereby adding to the racy beauty of the songs. He employed not only the standard Kannada but also the folksy, racy and colloquial Kannada, because he happened to be a democratic poet and not a court-poet. Some of his poetic utterances attained epigrammatic pithiness and universality.

Kanakadasa happens to be a very important saint-poet of Karnataka and belongs to the galaxy of the saint-poets of India and of the world. There is ample scope for researchers to study his themes, imagery and technique in comparison with those of other saint-poets like Basaveswara, Akkamahadevi, Vemana, Tiruvalluvar, Eknath, Jnanadeva, Chaitanya, Mira, Kabir, John Donne, George Herbert, St. Augustine, and St Teresa in order to see some universal patterns of religious and mystic experience.

Note : For Further Information, references, names of books etc. please contact the author.

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I am reminded of the position in which India was in the year 1942, during the last Great war. On the one side the Japanese had already bombed Calcutta and other Indian Stations, on the other side, the Germany and the Italians, with their conquests in Egypt and near the Cancasus, were intending to descent into India. India was caught between the devil and the deep sea, the Japanese on one side and the Germany and Italians on the other. But the cry of the devotees of India was heard by God, and India like a sparrow was saved from an intensely critical situation by the grace of God.

- Gurudeo Ranade
in Pathway to God in Hindi Literature p. 126

Ramgita

(Continued from last issue)

But the expressed meanings of tat and tvam are contradictory, hence abondoning them, their indicated senses must be adopted. Thus the desired identity of tat and tvam can be understood by Laksana only. All this is stated in the next verse No. 26

(26)

प्रत्यक् परोक्षादि-विरोधमात्मनो -
विंहाय संगृह्य तयोश्चिदात्मनाम्।
संशोधितां लक्षणमा च लक्षितां
ज्ञात्वा स्वमा त्मानमभाद्वयो भवेत् ॥२६॥

Setting aside the inconsistency (*virodha*) between the internal (*caitanya*) and caitanya beyond the senses etc. of the two selves (atmanoh) (namely Highest Self and individual self), understanding, after[1] search, through indication by laksana, that both the selves are of the nature of sentince (cidatmata), the spiritual aspirant will be non-dual, after realising that the Highest self is the same as one's own self (i.e. individual self) (26)

Explanation :- It should be noted that the word 'caitanya' is to be understood after the words pratyak and paroksha in the pratyak parokshadi compound. The word 'adi' shows additional qualifications of tat and tvam, thus:- Tat is omniscient (Sarvajna) and omnipotent (Sarva-sakti) while tvam some-knowing (alpajna) and with some power (alpa-sakti).

The identity of tat and tvam as the sense of the sentence tattvamasi (see verse No. 25) is not possible, in view of the contradiction / inconsistency in the expressed meanings of tat and tvam namely paroksa caitanya and pratyak caitanya, as the words paroksa and pratyak cannot go together. So we think and search to find out a way to remove the inconsistency and then we know that when the[2] expressed sense (mukhyartha) is not possible, we have to resort to laksana. This laksana must give only caitanya as the indicated sense (laksyartha) of tat and tvam; then only the identity of their meanings[3] will be possible.

Thus we leave aside the expressed senses of tat and tvam and adopt laksana which leads to the identity of their senses. A spiritual aspirant who thus understands the oneness of Supreme Self and individual self comes to know that his own self is identical with the Highest Self and so he becomes non-dual.

***

A question arises : which laksana is to be adopted? For there are many types of laksanas. The next verse No. 27 points out which laksanas are not possible and which laksana is suitable in case of tat and tvam.

(27)

एकात्मकत्वाज्जहती न संभवे -
त्तभाजहल्लसपता विरोधतः।
सोऽयं-पदार्भाविव भागलक्षणा
युज्येत तत्त्वं पदयोरदोषतः ॥२७॥

Just as Jahati laksana is not possible (in case of tat and tvam), as the nature (of both tat and tvam) is the same (namely sentince), so also Ajahati Laksana is not possible, as there is contradiction / inconsistency (in the expressed senses of tat and tvam). (virodhutah). Hence it becomes proper to adopt Bhaga-laksana of the words tat and tvam, as is done in case of the senses of the words sah and ayam (in the sentence Sah ayam asti), and then that becomes faultless (27).

Explanation :- It was seen under verse No. 26, that the identity of tat and tvam is possible, if both words mean caitanya, due to some laksana. This verse points out that two laksanas namely dahati and Ajahati do not yield the desired meaning but only Bhagalaksana can do so.

When Juhati laksana is adopted, the vacyartha (i.e. the expressed sense) is completely left out and a new indicated sense (laksyartha of course somehow connected with the expressed sense) is taken up e.g. In the sentence "Gangayam ghosah" (there is a hamlet on Ganga) the expressed sense of Ganga namely stream of water cannot be taken as a hamlet cannot be situated on water-stream. So leaving aside that vacyartha, the word 'Ganga' is taken to indicate the 'Shore of Ganga' with the use of Jahati laksana. But such Jahati Laksana is not possible in the sentence "tattvamasi". For if the vacyarthas of tat and tvam namely paroksa caitanya and pratyak caitanya are fully leftout, it will mean that the caitanya in their expressed senses is left out. But that cannot be done; for as seen in verse No. 26, the identity of tat and tvam is based on their being of the nature of caitanya. Hence Jahati Laksana cannot give the desired meaning of tattvamasi.

(to be continued...)

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Belgaum - 590 011.

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Bhagawadgeeta & its exposition by Sant Dnyaneshwar

Chapter IX (राजविद्‌या राजगुह्य योग)

The Supreme Knoweldge & the Soverign Secret Mystery

(Sanskrit Saint followed by English Translation)

(Continued from last issue)

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छांतिं निगच्छति।

कौंतेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तःप्रणश्यति ।।३१ ।।

In no time he becomes a soul of righteousness and obtains lasting peace. Oh Arjuna, know for certain that My devotee never perishes.

Sant Dnyaneshwar says -

If you think that, after some time, My devotee will reach My state (after death) then you have a misunderstanding. Though in the body, My devotee lives in a deathless state. Then how he will pass through death? You see, when the Sun does not rise, we call it night. All deeds done without devotion to Me are like the night where the Sun does not rise. Is it not great sin to do so? Oh Son of Pandu, when the devotee becomes one with my Chitta, he attains My swaroop and becomes deathless. If we light one lamp with the other, one cannot know which is first and which is second. Likewise, the devotee who worships Me with all his being, he reaches Me in all respects. He attains My being, My brightness and My eternal peace. In brief, he lives with My soul. Oh Partha, how many times, I will tell you the same thing? If one who wants to attain Me, he should never for a moment forget devotion to Me. For devotion to Me, you do not need any certificate of family background, nor highness of caste, nor learned education, nor sweetness of young age, nor ego of wealth. But if Devotion is missing, all the above attributes are of no use at all. What is the use of a heavy crop of grain ears without any grains? What is the use of a beautiful city without any residents in it? If there is a big lake, but it has gone dry or in a waste land one unhappy forlorn man meets another unhappy forlorn man, what is the use. If a tree is full of flowers which cannot bear fruit or a the wealth of a family or caste which have no progeny, what is the use. If the body is full of all the linbs but no life. Similarly, the whole life is futile without devotion to Me. There are many rocks on the surface of the earth as well as many thorny bushes, but they are not considered useful. Similarly, those who do not take the path of devotion to Me, do not become meritorious. The tree of sour fruit (लिंबोणी) eventhough bent with many fruit is of no use except for crows. Likewise, a man not given to devotion to Me, grows only to accumulate sin. A dish full of many sweet preparations, if kept in the open attracts only dogs. A person does not know meritorious behaviour even in his dreams, only invites a large dish of unhappiness in this wordly life. Therefore even if there is lack of good ancentral descent, or there is the lowest caste, or even if one gets a body of a beast, one should follow the path of devotion.

Everybody knows that when the leg of the royal elephant was held by a crocodile, he remembered Me and helplessly asked for My protection, I have gave him refuge in Me, even though he was a beast.

मांहि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः।

स्त्रियो वैश्यस्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम्॥३२॥

For those who take refuge in Me, Oh Partha, though they be lowly born, women, vaishyas or sudras, they all attain to the highest goal in life (liberation)

Sant Dnyaneshwar says -

Oh Partha, those who have taken birth in the lowest of the lowest race or caste and in intellegence a dumb fool, but still if they have firm devotion in Me, whose utterences are My name only. Whose sight is used to see My figure only, whose mind has no belief except Mine, whose ears always hear utterences of My attributes, whose limbs are used to serve Me alone, whose imagination sees nobody except Me and who live if all the above is true and if not attain a natural death, Oh Partha, those who have thus made Me the lone support of their life, for them, whether they are lowly in birth, caste, intellegence or any thing else, they are in no matter lower than Me. In Devotion, the Daithyas surpassed even the Devas and I had to incarnate as Nrusimha because of the greatness of Pralhada's devotion. Oh Partha, Pralhad who underwent many calamities and perils for attaining Me, and whose life description brings the same high bliss to others as to Me. His birth was in a Daitya family, but he attained a greatness far greater than that of Indra. Therefore, to attain Me, Devotion alone is sufficient. No other attributes are necessary. If the Royal order is written on a piece of leather, it is sufficient to attain wealth, where gold or silver have no value, the Royal order does the work. Likewise, when the mind and reason are imbibed with love towards Me, then only greatness and learning get their value. Therefore, Oh Arjuna, ancentral descent, caste, or varna (profession), all have no value unless there is devotion to Me. Flowing water is known as a spring, a brook, a stream or rivulet, but when they merge in the river Ganges, they all attain the name 'Ganga'. Till the different types of wood known as Khair, timber, chandan have their names. Once there are put in fire, all the names are lost. Once salt is put in the sea, it becomes one with the sea and cannot be separated. Likewise, Once a man comes to Me whole heartedly and he becomes one with Me, the caste, varna, Individuality and separate existences disappear. The river is also called eastward flowing, westward flowing or southward flowing till it meets the sea whatever be the cause, once the mind and attention is devoted to Me, it becomes one with Me.

To break the Philosopher's stone (which converts everything into gold by touch), if one uses a steel axe, the axe itself becomes gold. The Gopies devoted their mind and attention to Me because of their desire, but they became one with Me forgetting their desire. The King Kansa (Krishna's maternal uncle) because of his great fear of Me, he became one with Me. Likewise Shishupal also became one with Me, because of his continuous enmity towards Me. The Pandavas and Vasudevadik Yadavas because of my relationship with them could they not get oneness with Me? Oh Arjuna, Narad, Dhruva, Akrur,Shuka and Sanatkumar attained Me through devotion. Likewise, Gopies attained Me through desire, Kansa through intense fear, and Shishupalathika through intense enmity. Oh Arjuna, I am the ultimate resort for all. whether they reach Me through devotion, through Desire or Enmity or through ascetic liberation from all desires. Therefore Oh, Partha, there is no dearth of measures to attain Me. One may belong to any caste, lowest or highest, he may have devotion to Me, or enmity to Me, he will reach Me. Whether devotion or enmity, it should be directed to Me only. If a man takes refuge in Me due to any cause, he will certainly be one with Me. Oh Arjuna, whether born in any Sinful race or Vaishya, Shudra, women, if they come to Me with devotion, they are sure to attain Me.

(To be continued)

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It is the supreme duty of every human being to become a fit resceptacle of the vision of God. None knows what lies on the other side of death.

- Gurudev R.D. Ranade

Book Review -

Spiritual science at the Primary stage, Volume II, Removal of defects in one's nature part 1 & 2, compiled by Dr. Jayant Balaji Athavale and others published by Sanatan Sanstha, Ratnagiri, Raj Ganga Apartments Dhavali, Phonda, Goa 403401, Tel. :0832-2312334, ISBN 81-903394-0-0-Price Rs. 60/- & ISBN-81-903394-1-9 - Price Rs. 70/- Language Marathi.

The books illustrates the first three steps namely the Yama, Niyama and Pratyahar of Patanjali. The books give a number of examples from practice by different persons under their Guru. It brings out certain defects in nature which generally go unnoticed but they are harmful in the Sadhana. It also brings them out to improve the Nation and Society at the cultural level which goes to Personality Development in Individual's life. The book is worth reading for personal upliftment and success in spiritual Sadhana.

Religious Therapeutics, Body and Health in Yoga

Ayurved and Tantra. Author Gregory P. Fields Publisher Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, 41, U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110007; Price 195.

In the above book the author has explored the relationship between psycho-physical health and spiritual health and presents a model for interpreting connections between religion and medicine in world of traditions. This model emerges from the work's investigation of health and religiousness in classical Yoga, Ayurved and Tantra the three Hindu traditions noteworthy for the central role they accord to the body. The author uses fifteen determinants of health from ancient Hindu texts in Medicine to show that health concerns the person and not the body or body/ mind alone. The author elucidates multifaceted views of health in the context of spirituality and healing and explores themes such as mental health, meditation and music.

The need for well-being of body, mind and spirit marks the common ground of medical and religious effort. The terms 'cure' and 'restore' reveals two perspectives of healing. Curing refers to alleviating impaired functioning and restoring cannotes returning to the original state of well being. The close relationship between healing and religion is well substantiated in the Indian tradition, where liberation is often construed as return to one's unimpaired state of true nature. The 'Swasthya' means 'coinciding with oneself' or 'self abiding' In Hinduism, religious knowledge and medical knowledge are rooted in Vedic knowledge intuited by ancient seers. Vedic knowledge is considered to provide comprehension that is more complete and truthful than knowledge gained through the senses. Ayurved exemplifies co-operation of empirical and intuitive knowledge and attention to both earthly and spiritual concerns.

Chapter 1 - Treats "Body and Philosophies of Healing and examines both European and Indian assumptions".

Chapter 2 - Gives Meanings of Health in Ayurved.

Chapter 3 - Treats classical yoga as religious Therapeutics.

Chapter 4 - Treats Tantra and Aesthetic Therapeutics.

Music, Sanskrit Chanting of Mandras as well as use of figures like Shri Chakras are also treated in the text.

The book is highly relevant in to-day's world that has on one end the Highly advanced Allopathic System of medicine treating the disease in body or the mind but no connection with religion or spirit and at the other end the Yoga, spiritualism and whole system of living to bring peace to Mankind.

It may not be impertinent to add here to mention the non-vegetarian food after killing so many animals against environment and religion brings so many diseases and not a peaceful mind, while vegetarian entails no killing of animals, less diseases and peaceful mind. The latter will come under the religious and spiritual aspect of living.

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New India has to be built upon Indian Traditions

We must grow according to our nature. Vain is it to attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engaged upon us; it is impossible... I do not condemn the institutions of other races; they are good for them, but not for us. What is meant for them may be poison for us. This is the first lesson to learn. With other sciences, other institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have got their present system. We, with our tradition, with thousands of years of Karma behind us, naturally can only follow our own bent; run in our own grooves; and that we shall have to do.

- Swami Vivekanand

Interim World Philosophical Congress and 81st Indian Philsophical Congress New Delhi

The Intermediary session of Interim World Philosophy Congress and the 81st session of The Indian Philosphical Congress were held from 15th to 17th December 2006 and 15th to 20th December 2006 respectively under the auspices of the Delhi University, Delhi.

The Interim World Philosophy Congress was organised by the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), The Indian Philosophical Congress, The Indian Council of Philosophical Research, The centre for the studies in Civilizations and Akhil Bharatiya Darshan Praishad. It was the first opportunity for any Asian country to organise the prestigious session of the world philosophy Congress on its soil. The main theme of the Congress was "Philosophy in Emerging Age of Global Society". The Indian Philosophy Congress also held its 81st session in the Interim session of the World Philosophical Congress. This enabled the scholars of our country to participate in this International Congress session. It was by the active participation of the scholars from India and other different countries of the Globe and the grand stewardship of Dr. Karan Singh, that both the sessions became a success and a memorable event for the philosophical community.

The main theme of the FISP Interim Congress was "The Philosophy in the Emerging Global Society." In conformity of this theme there were three plenary sessions 1) Global Society for Peace and Progress - problems and prospects 2) Science, Technology and Economy in shaping prospetctus 3) Art, Literature and Ethics for unity of mankind.

In conformity of the plenary sessions, four simposia were also held. They were 1) Future of civilization in the Post Modern World 2) Buddhism and Social Order 3) Is Philosophy regional or Global 4) Philosophy and quality of life in Post-Modern World.

In addition, nine sections on various topics for contributed papers were held.

In the 81st session of Indian Philosophical Congress the six Endowment Lectures were held and live sessions on various topics for contributed papers were held. Also two symposia- one on Ethics of Globalization and another on Justice and contesting views were held.

For the Inaugural session of the Interim world Philosophy Congress, Professor D. P. Chattopadhay was the chairman and Vice Chancellor Delhi University Profesor Deepak Pental, conveyed his greetings to the delegates. Dr. (Mrs.) Sheila Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi gave welcome address to the delegates. Professor Peter Kemp, President of FISP gave the opening speech, followed by greetings by Professor William McBride, Secretary General of FISP and Chairman's address.

The Valedictory session of the Interim World Philosophy Congress was held on 18th Dec. 2006. Prof. Ioanna Kurucadi was the chairperson of the session. Dr. Karan Singh, Chairman of Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University gave the valediectory address on Vedant : A philosophy for Global Society.

On behalf of Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion Belgaum, five persons participated in both the sessions of Interim World Philosphy and Indian Philosophical Congress. They were -

1) Sri. M. B. Zirali, Secretary ACPR

2) Sri. B. N. Aigali, Advocate & Member ACPR

3) Sri. L. V. Patil, Advocate & Member ACPR

4) Dr. I. S. Kumbar Editorial Member of Pathway to God

5) Shri. M. S. Patil Advocate and Member of ACPR

They actively participated in the sessions, met the eminent scholars of the world emphasized the importance of the activities, vision and mission included in ACPR by Gurudev Dr. R. D. Ranade. Many eminent scholars of the world showed interest in knowing the activities of the ACPR.

Prof. Dr. I. S. Kumbar

Activities of A.C.P.R.

Quarterly Report for the period ending 31st March 2007

We thank the following Donors :

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Our New Subscribers to Magazine Pathway to God :

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5) Shivaram A. Patil, Dandeli.
6) Dr. Yogini Nidyoskar, Baroda.

Under the auspices of Dr. R. D. Ranade science of Yoga and Research Institute Dr. M. Niranjan Murthy, President of International Yoga Institute and Research Foundation, gave a lecture on The Onkar Worship and its benefits. He explained in detail how this worship should be followed and gave same excellent demonstrations of the same.

Shri. Indira Joshi had welcomed the guest speaker and Principal Dr. S. S. Kotrannavar proposed the vote of thanks. Students, teachers and staff members attended the lecture.

Belgaum.
31-03-2007

M. B. Zirali
Secretary, A. C. P. R.

ACPR's DEVELOPMENTAL PLANS

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b) School for refreshing re-orientation to be modelled as a training center for Academicians, Legislators, Administrators, Leaders / Intellectual spokesmen of the Society.

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Pursuit for Global awareness for

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ONE WORLD
ONE HUMANITY

ACPR

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